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Augusta Historical Bulletin: Editorial Policy

The editors of the *Augusta Historical Bulletin* welcome submissions relating to any topic or period in the history of Augusta County, Virginia, and its wider environs. Submissions may take the form of articles, research notes, edited documents, or indexes to historical documents. Other formats might be acceptable but prospective authors of such submissions are encouraged to consult with a member of the editorial board. With rare exceptions, the *Bulletin* does not publish manuscripts that focus exclusively on genealogical matters. Authors should strive to make their contributions accessible to a broad readership. In matters of form and style, authors should adhere to the guidelines and strictures set forth in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed., or Kate L. Turabian, et al., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed., both of which are widely available in libraries and bookstores. A style sheet, prepared by the editors of the *Bulletin*, is available upon request. Authors should submit four double-spaced copies of their manuscripts, with endnotes where applicable, and include photocopies of any illustrations. Upon acceptance of the manuscript for publication, authors must provide an electronic copy of it, as well as publishable-quality illustrations.

Manuscripts or requests for style sheets should be sent to: The Augusta County Historical Society, Attention: Bulletin Editors, P.O. Box 686, Staunton, Virginia 24402-0686. Please try to submit proposed manuscripts by June 1, 2006. Queries may also be sent to: Nancy Sorrells (lotswife@comcast.net) or Katharine Brown (klbrown@cfw.com).

Virginia facing reality

The 1959 Perrow Commission

by George M. Cochran
Virginia Supreme Court Justice, retired

The Augusta County Historical Society is pleased to present to its members the following document which details an important part of mid-twentieth century Virginia history. The author, Justice George Moffett Cochran, a longtime member of our organization, has presented this document to the society for its archives. Justice Cochran, who was born in Staunton in 1912, is the son of local attorney Peyton Cochran, and a descendant of A.H.H. Stuart, probably Staunton's most significant political figure of the nineteenth century. Justice Cochran graduated from Robert E. Lee High School, studied at the University of Virginia, completed his legal training and practiced with his father in Staunton. He served with the U.S. Navy during World War II, from January of 1942 to January of 1946, then returned to the practice of law. From 1948 to 1966 he served in the Virginia House of Delegates, and in 1966 was elected to the Virginia Senate. In 1969 he was appointed to the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, where he served until retiring in 1987. From the museum's founding in 1986 until 1998, Cochran was chairman of the board of the Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton. His recollections of the work of the Perrow Commission that follow provide an excellent record of a difficult period in Virginia history, one in which Cochran played a significant role in breaking Virginia's long tradition of racial discrimination.

Introduction

My friend, Kossen Gregory, of Roanoke, and I are surviving members of the 1959 Perrow Commission appointed by Virginia Governor J. Lindsay Almond, Jr., February 5, 1959, to recommend measures to solve the crisis in the Public Free School System of Virginia. We feel that our service on the Perrow Commission and thereafter in actively supporting in the General Assembly the legislation recommended by the majority of the commission was the most difficult and important of our legislative years. We also feel that the leadership role of the late State Senator Mosby G. Perrow, Jr., as Chairman of the Commission, has never been adequately recognized or appreciated.

I am using the Report of the Commission dated March 31, 1959, Concurring Statements, Dissenting Report, various newspaper clippings, especially from *The Roanoke Times*, and the fading memories of Kossen Gregory and myself to give a reasonably accurate general description of the five-year period (1954-1959) that we believe was the most difficult for Virginia in the twentieth century. I have also had the benefit of discussion that Kossen Gregory has had with Melville Carrico, now retired, then an active political reporter for *The Roanoke Times*, who covered the report of the Perrow Commission and the 1959 Special Session of the General Assembly that acted on the legislation recommended by the commission.

Necessity for Appointment of Commission

The Supreme Court of the United States, on May 17, 1954, in *Brown v Board of Education*, 347 US 483, struck down the state constitutional provisions and laws requiring racial separation of children in public schools. This decision, though unanimous, shocked the majority of the people of Virginia. I know of no member of the General Assembly of Virginia who ever voiced approval of the opinion. Some of us who began our legislative service in 1948 were veterans of World War II. We had introduced legislation providing for elimination of the Jim Crow laws and the Poll Tax as inappropriate restrictions on black citizens. Having recently served in a war that all Americans helped to win, we favored these concessions. We felt that voluntary action of this kind would promote racial harmony and might lead to greater cooperation between the races and less pressure to integrate the public schools at a later date. Whether this theory had any merit will never be known because the proposed legislation was never approved in Virginia.

Governor Thomas B. Stanley appointed in August 1954, a commission of thirty-two members of the Senate and House of Delegates, chaired by Senator Garland Gray, to consider the *Brown* case and to make such recommendations for Virginia as might be appropriate. Chief counsel for the commission was David J. Mays, a distinguished lawyer. The commission reported to the governor in November 1955, recommending a plan of pupil assignment that may not have been approved by the Federal courts, and a tuition grant program to assist students wishing to attend private (segregated) schools. The tuition grant proposal required amendment to the Virginia Constitu-



Virginia State Senator Mosby G. Perrow, Jr.

tion and this was promptly accomplished. The amendment was approved by the General Assembly and then by the voters of Virginia in a special election.

I had an opportunity to discuss briefly with David Mays the recommendations of the Gray Commission. They were, he said, the absolute maximum that could be drawn from *Brown*. He had informally reported this to Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr., in Washington and the Senator had said that integration of the public schools could not be permitted to happen but he could offer no reasonable alternative.

The term "massive resistance," refusal to permit any integration, was attributed to Senator Byrd and with such influential support it became a rallying cry for thousands of people throughout the South. The intellectual leader of this movement, or lack of movement, was James J. Kilpatrick, the fiery editor of *The Richmond News Leader*, who began to write powerful editorials espousing the doctrine of "interposition," under which a state would interpose its sovereignty against the tyranny of the national government. The General Assembly of Virginia approved a resolution expressing this principle. Some doubtful members felt that this revival of John C. Calhoun's old theory that appeared to have been defeated by the Civil War could be no more successful at this later date.

The Gray Commission had recommended a pupil assignment plan designed to continue for the most part racial segregation in the public schools and a tuition grant program for those unwilling to send their children to integrated schools. When it became clear that no one could guarantee that there would be absolutely no school integration under the Gray Commission plan, sentiment quickly changed in the attitude of the political leaders of Virginia. Governor Stanley, who had been a business executive and not a lawyer, declined to approve the Gray Commission report. Senator Garland Gray, Chairman of the Commission, repudiated its recommendations, followed by other commission members. The commission had been heavily weighted in favor of the Southside areas where the black population was larger than elsewhere in the state. Those who rejected the recommendations made after more than a year of deliberating became some of the most fervent leaders of the "massive resistance" movement.

In Washington, D. C., the "massive resistance" theme appeared to be strongly promoted by Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr., Congressman and former Governor William M. Tuck, and Congressman Watkins F. Abbitt. In Richmond, the strongest voices were those of Attorney General J. Lindsay Almond, Jr. and Senator Mills F. Godwin.

In 1956 legislation was approved in Special Session that would close any public school integrated by Federal order. The following year, the Attorney General, J. Lindsay Almond, Jr., announced that he would run for governor. This announcement took at least one prospective candidate by surprise. Senator Garland Gray, a successful business executive and a long-time leader of the conservative bloc

of the Senate, had wanted to be governor. He was close to Senator Byrd, Sr., but he had not acted fast enough. Many people had committed themselves to Almond.

I remember receiving a call from J. Randolph "Bunny" Tucker, Jr., an able member of the Richmond delegation in the House of Delegates. He was soliciting support for Almond. "He is a good lawyer," said "Bunny," "and smart enough to know that if the 'massive resistance' laws are invalidated some integration will follow." I agreed to support him. Not long afterward, Senator Gray's son-in-law, Thomas Tullidge of Staunton, called on me to sound me out on Gray's prospects if he ran for governor. Since Senator Gray had headed the commission which made a recommendation of pupil assignment and tuition grants and then repudiated the recommendation, I suggested that Gray's indecision would be hard to explain or overcome.

Lindsay Almond went on to win the governorship, beating Senator Ted Dalton, the Republican candidate who had almost defeated Governor Stanley four years earlier. Dalton proposed local pupil assignment and Almond, a fire-eating Southern Fourth of July orator, overwhelmed him with "massive resistance" purple prose.

The year 1958 opened with Lindsay Almond as governor and former Senator Albertis S. Harrison, Jr., as attorney general. The governor gave a typically militant message to the regular session of the General Assembly. He had included in the Appropriation Act an appropriation of \$3,000,000 or a sum sufficient to pay tuition grants of \$250 per year for each student withdrawing from the public school system to go to a private school. The new attorney general began a series of uphill fights in the Federal courts to sustain the "massive resistance" laws. He later told me that it was a sad experience for a lawyer to enter a Federal court knowing he was almost certain to lose.

In September 1958, my wife and I were in Rome on our first trip to Europe, scheduled to feature in Paris the dedication of a plaque in memory of Woodrow Wilson given by the people of Virginia to the people of France. We passed a newsstand and saw, to our amazement, a copy of *Time Magazine* with Lindsay Almond's face adorning the front page. There he was, in full battle mode, white hair scattered over his face, holding the line on "massive resistance."

The "massive resistance" laws came under attack in the fall of 1958 in the Federal courts when six public schools in Norfolk, two in

Charlottesville, and one in Warren County, were closed under Virginia law because they were ordered integrated by Federal courts. A three-Judge Federal Special Court heard Norfolk petitions objecting to the school closing. In the meantime, a petition was filed by the Attorney General of Virginia against the State Comptroller requesting entry of a writ of mandamus after determining the validity of several “massive resistance” laws. Decisions in both cases were announced on the same date, the Federal decision after the State one.

The Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia (now The Supreme Court of Virginia) decided, on a 5 to 2 vote, that the writ of mandamus be denied. The majority opinion written by Chief Justice Eggleston, held that Section 141 of the Virginia Constitution, invalidated by *Brown v Board of Education*, was independent of Section 129 requiring the Virginia to maintain an efficient system of public free schools throughout the state. Thus the laws under consideration violated Section 129 “in that they remove from the public school system any schools in which pupils of the two races are mixed, and make no provision for their support and maintenance as a part of the system.” The court, however, found no constitutional objection to the prescribed provisions for making tuition grants and left this to the discretion of the General Assembly. *Harrison v Day*, 200 VA. 439 (1959). On the same date, January 19, 1959, the Federal Special Court decided that the Virginia school-closing law violated petitioners’ rights under the United States Constitution.

Governor Almond’s initial reaction to the unfavorable court decisions was to make an appeal by radio and television to Virginians to stand firm with him because “we’ve only begun to fight.” A few days later he called the General Assembly into Special Session to consider the crisis. This would be the third Special Session called within three years. In addressing the Special Session the Governor was more realistic in his more thoughtful consideration of the court decisions. He acknowledged that he was now powerless to block the entry of some Negro students into some Virginia schools the next week. This admission enraged diehard segregationists who preferred for him to lock the schools or surround them with state police. I remember one Southside Delegate on the floor of the House calling the Governor a “traitor” to Virginia for his capitulation. This eloquence enabled him to run successfully for the Senate where he served for many years.

The governor proposed three stopgap measures that were duly approved. One repealed the mandatory schools attendance law. Another activated the tuition grant program by approving grants of \$250 each and appropriating \$3,000,000 or a sum sufficient to finance the grants. The third provided more severe penalties for making false reports of bombs in public buildings.

The governor announced that he would appoint a commission of members of the General Assembly to study the public school problem and make recommendations. On February 5, 1959, he appointed such a commission to be headed by State Senator Mosby G. Perrow, Jr., Chairman, to make recommendations to him by March 31, 1959. Four members were appointed for each of the ten Congressional districts in the state as shown below. An executive committee, consisting of one member from each Congressional district, was appointed as follows: Delegates Davis, Roberts, Pollard, Moore, and Cochran, and Senators Fitzpatrick, Godwin, Hagood, Button, and Fenwick.

An able lawyer and former member of the House of Delegates, W. R. Broaddus, Jr., of Martinsville, was named Counsel to the Commission. He was assisted by C. F. Hicks, Walter E. Rogers, and Henry T. Wickham.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

MOSBY G. PERROW, JR., *Chairman*

HARRY B. DAVIS, *Vice-Chairman*

First Congressional District

HOWARD H. ADAMS

RUSSELL M. CARNEAL

HARRY B. DAVIS

W. MARVIN MINTER

Second Congressional District

EDWARD L. BREEDEN, JR.

W. T. LEARY

WILLARD J. MOODY

JAMES W. ROBERTS

Third Congressional District

FITZGERALD BEMISS

FRED G. POLLARD

EDWARD E. WILLEY

JOSEPH J. WILLIAMS, JR.

Fourth Congressional District

JOHN H. DANIEL

MILLS E. GODWIN, JR.

GARLAND GRAY

JOSEPH C. HUTCHESON

Fifth Congressional District

J.D. HAGOOD

S. FLOYD LANDRETH

C. STUART WHEATLEY, JR.

HUNT M. WHITEHEAD

Sixth Congressional District

EARL A. FITZPATRICK

KOSSEN GREGORY

MOSBY G. PERROW, JR.

H. RAY WEBBER

Seventh Congressional District

CURRY CARTER

GEORGE M. COCHRAN

LAWRENCE H. HOOVER

ROBERT WHITEHEAD

Eighth Congressional District

ROBERT Y. BUTTON

ROBERT R. GWATHMEY, III

EDWARD O. McCUE, JR.

W. TAYLOE MURPHY

Ninth Congressional District

M. M. LONG

GARNETT S. MOORE

VERNON C. SMITH

HARRY C. STUART

Tenth Congressional District

JOHN A. K. DONOVAN

CHARLES R. FENWICK

C. HARRISON MANN, JR.

JAMES M. THOMSON

After extensive hearings and discussions, a majority report was signed by thirty-one of the forty members of the commission. This report recommended a bill to require the State Board of Education to adopt rules and regulations for the use of local school boards in making initial placement of pupils in the public schools, and creating a State Placement Board of Appeals to review the placement of pupils, with appeals to the State courts. The report further recommended a bill to provide for "local option" in dealing with compulsory attendance and a bill to provide for each child a minimum scholarship (tuition grant) of \$250. Drafts of bills to carry out the recommendations were included in an appendix. The report further recommended repeal of various sections of the Code.

Several qualifying or explanatory statements were filed by members of the majority. A dissenting report was filed by Godwin, Wheatley, Thomson, Hagood, Hutcheson, Carneal, Daniel, McCue, and Gray. This recommended removal of the mandatory provisions of the Virginia Constitution requiring the establishment and maintenance of an efficient free public school system throughout Virginia in order to continue "massive resistance." Some of us in the majority believed that

many dissenters knew the majority position was correct but voted against it for political protection in re-election campaigns.

On March 31, 1959, the Special Session of the General Assembly, in recess since February 2, 1959, reconvened to act on the Report of the Commission on Education (the Perrow Commission) filed that day with the governor. The atmosphere in the Capitol was tense. Many of us who were preparing to sponsor or support the legislation proposed in the majority report did not underestimate the difficulties. We firmly believed, however, that this was the most important session of the General Assembly since Reconstruction days after the Civil War. And several of us, brought by the governor from relative obscurity during the depths of "massive resistance" to active participation in the effort to face reality welcomed the opportunity to make an affirmative impact. Thus, Kossen Gregory felt that a short affirmative slogan would be helpful in promoting the Perrow Commission program. He proposed calling it the "Freedom of Choice" plan and this happy upbeat label was enthusiastically adopted as the motto for the crucial contest.

Although the Governor strongly backed it, passage of the legislative package recommended by the Perrow Commission was far from certain. The dissenters, who preferred to continue "massive resistance," had substantial support in the Senate and House. Composition of committees was important. In both bodies, massive resisters in substantial numbers were members of key committees. Moreover, in the Senate of forty members two, counted on to support the Perrow legislation, were absent. One, Stuart B. Carter, of Botetourt, was in Richmond but ill. The other, Robert Baldwin, of Norfolk, was absent without explanation. Baldwin was a man of courtly appearance and manners, popular in Norfolk, re-elected without effort, and admired in the General Assembly in Senate and House. Upon inquiry I was told that the Senator had gone to visit his daughter who was living in Italy. Later, it was suggested that he might be suffering from cancer and did not have long to live. This rumor was subsequently found to be incorrect. A sad ending to a political career; he failed to report for duty when it counted most.

Mosby Perrow took charge of the campaign in the Senate to pass the legislative program recommended by the Perrow Commission. He was assisted by Senator Fenwick and the other Senators who

served on the commission, including Senator Edward L. Breeden, Jr. of Norfolk, a master of parliamentary procedure. The opposition was led by Senator Godwin, assisted by Senator Gray and other dissenters. The commanding figure of Mills Godwin, however, was the magnet that attracted the defiant support of the “massive resisters” in and out of the General Assembly.

On the House side, Harry B. Davis, Vice-Chairman of the Commission and Chairman of the House Education Committee, led, assisted by Pollard, Gregory, Cochran, and others from the Perrow Commission. C. Stuart Wheatley, a Danville lawyer and a dissenter on the Perrow Commission, led the opposition, quietly supported by the Speaker of the House, E. Blackburn Moore.

Representatives from white citizens councils and other anti-integration groups made their wishes known for continued “massive resistance.” It was a tense time. There was even a report, never verified, that a shot may have been fired at the governor as he walked from the Executive Mansion to the Capitol. But there had been a considerable change in public opinion, especially in the business community, since the “massive resistance” laws had been invalidated, in January 1959, by both Virginia and Federal courts.

The so-called anti-Perrow Commission bloc in the Special Session of the General Assembly filed a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment to rewrite Section 129 to free the General Assembly from having to appropriate funds for public schools. The bloc also expressed opposition to the pupil assignment bill proposed by the Perrow Commission and to passage of any kind of compulsory attendance law.

The key recommendation of the Perrow Commission was the pupil assignment plan and this, of course, was bitterly opposed by the dissenters and their allies in the Special Session. Duplicate bills, one filed in the Senate, the other in the House, were designed to enact the pupil assignment plan into law. The bills were referred to the Education Committees of Senate and House, respectively, for action.

A day or two before the House Education Committee was to vote on the legislation, Hunt Whitehead, a member of the Perrow Commission (he had filed a qualifying statement) and a member of the Education Committee, spoke to me in confidence. He knew the bill was in the best interests of Virginia, he said. But he was in an impossible po-

litical situation. His people in Pittsylvania County were violently opposed to integration of the public schools. A man was standing on the street corner in Chatham waiting to see how he voted on the pupil assignment bill. If he voted for it he would never return to the General Assembly. Knowing how close the vote might be on the committee, I could only sympathize with Hunt and tell him to make the best decision he could under the circumstances. On April 13, 1959, the vote was taken in committee on my motion to approve. It passed by one vote, 9 to 8, and Hunt Whitehead cast the winning vote. As he had anticipated, he never was re-elected to the General Assembly. Without using his name I have often cited this as an example of political courage that was crucial but never rewarded. I am glad to record my eternal admiration for a statesman with the heart of a lion.

On the following day, April 14, the Senate Education Committee, after a public hearing, defeated on a voice vote the Senate pupil assignment bill. The next day, after four hours of debate, the House approved the House bill reported from the Education Committee 54 to 45, leading to final passage 54 to 46, which came without difficulty. This action brought the approved House bill to the Senate for final disposition. The problem was the anti-Perrow Commission majority on the Senate Education Committee. The parliamentary device used to permit a full vote on the pupil assignment bill was to resolve the Senate into a Committee of the Whole with Senator Breeden presiding. This was accomplished in dramatic fashion when Senator Stuart B. Carter was wheeled into the Senate chambers on a stretcher to cast the twentieth favorable vote. The total vote was 20 to 19 (Baldwin absent) with Senator Curry Carter, who had signed the majority report of the Perrow Commission, voting against the motion. Then, on April 20, on the same 20 to 19 vote the local pupil assignment bill was approved. Earlier on that date the House defeated the Wheatley resolution calling for amendment to the Virginia Constitution.

Various other noncontroversial legislation recommended by the Perrow Commission was duly approved, including, for instance, provision for reinstating compulsory attendance laws on a local option basis. Those of us who served on the Perrow Commission and helped put the program into law felt the satisfaction of having done something worthwhile for the Commonwealth. We felt that we had saved

the public school system of Virginia by a tiny margin. The “Freedom of Choice” plan had prevailed.

We were confident that continuation of the policy of “massive resistance” would have brought chaos to Virginia and would have permanently damaged the reputation of the state. We believed that the proposal to submit to the electorate a constitutional amendment to eliminate the requirement of funding for the public school system was only a delaying tactic. The majority of voters doubtless would have rejected the proposed amendment but the contest itself would have led to a continuation of bitter animosity.

Reckless, indeed, was the independent action of Prince Edward County in closing its public schools for five years, 1959-1964, by declining to appropriate local funds for public schools until a Federal court intervened. Only recently, fifty years after *Brown v Board of Education*, has official action been taken to recognize and provide some compensation for the pain and suffering caused to victims of the closings of public schools between 1954 and 1964. In the 2005 Session of the General Assembly *Brown v Board of Education Scholarship Program and Fund* was established (Code §30-231.1-10) to provide educational opportunities for persons who were unable to begin or continue their education because of public school closings in Norfolk, Charlottesville, Warren County, or Prince Edward County between 1954 and 1964. Of this fund of \$2,050,000, the sum of \$1,000,000 was contributed by a Virginia philanthropist. Scholarships are presently being awarded to qualified applicants.

We admired Mosby Perrow, a genial giant, a conservative Senator who generally would have been temperamentally close to the massive resisters but who was determined to save the public schools. He stayed in close association with the governor and planned the strategy for overcoming practical problems. Through his political skill and personality he converted a group of rugged individuals into an effective legislative team. His political fate followed that of other prophets--he was defeated in the 1963 election.

As for Governor Almond, after he decided to appoint the Perrow Commission, he never wavered in supporting the work of the commission. The days of purple oratory were over. He worked day and night to promote the legislative program recommended by the commission. I remember going to the governor’s den on the second floor

of the Mansion at 10 p.m. one night to request that he enlist the immediate support of the business community. I specifically suggested that he call, among other executives, Stuart Saunders, President of the Norfolk & Western Railway and ask him to organize the state-wide business executives who would suffer from abolition of the public school system. He promptly agreed and acted at once.

The governor was a pitiful figure at this time. The political leaders of Virginia remained committed to the repudiated doctrine of "massive resistance." He was left alone in the Mansion with his devoted wife, Josephine, and he was happy to have some of us eager Perrow Commission members come to him even late at night to plan ways and means of advancing the remedial program. As "Bunny" Tucker had told me months earlier, Almond was a good enough lawyer to know when Virginia and Federal courts invalidated his massive resistance laws, that the end of "massive resistance" must be recognized. For thus facing reality, his reputation suffered but the Commonwealth benefited from the return to the rule of law.

Frontier forts of western Virginia: Their role within historical and contemporary landscape

by W. Stephen McBride, Ph.D.,
McBride Preservation Services
Kim A. McBride, Ph.D.,
Kentucky Archaeological Survey

The husband-and-wife historical archaeologist team of Drs. Stephen and Kim McBride presented this paper at the Augusta County Historical Society's annual banquet held May 15, 2006, at the Holiday Inn in Staunton. Kim McBride is the co-director of the Kentucky Archaeological Survey that is sponsored through the University of Kentucky and the state of Kentucky. She is also a professor at the University of Kentucky. Her husband is the director of interpretive archaeology at the Camp Nelson Heritage Park in Kentucky. Both have published extensively on the frontier conflicts of the eighteenth century and have investigated many of the eighteenth-century military forts in places that were once part of Augusta's original boundaries, like Highland County.

Introduction

In this article we take a look at middle to late eighteenth century frontier forts in western Virginia (including lands now part of West Virginia and Kentucky). We emphasize their role within a defensive system, their place within the frontier and contemporary landscape, and their structure/construction. We utilize documentary and archaeological data to examine these topics, as well as tie in to some recent scholarship on frontier settlement. We use four archaeological examples from forts we have recently excavated.

Virginia's frontier forts met a critical defensive need during the Indian wars of the middle to late eighteenth century. These forts were generally built by local citizens, county militia, or provincial soldiers, or a combination of these. They provided a place of refuge for settlers and a point to garrison troops. In many cases the presence and defense of these forts prevented total abandonment of a frontier settlement.

Unfortunately, there are very few specific descriptions of these middle to late eighteenth century forts. Documents suggest that many were built of vertically placed logs forming a stockade and with various log buildings placed inside. Other forts, particularly in the French and Indian War, may have been built partially of earth and horizontal logs for extra protection against artillery.

Fortunately, archaeology can answer some of the questions that documents cannot, particularly in the case of the design and construction methods of eighteenth century frontier forts. Subsurface remains such as stone foundations, excavated stockade trenches, and post molds can help us understand the original footprint and construction methods of a fort. Artifacts inside these features, such as nails, spikes, and daub (sun baked clay) can provide additional information on construction methods.

The Frontier Defensive System

It is impossible to understand the nature and function of frontier forts without some background on the frontier defensive system in which they operated. When the French and Indian War began in 1754, local frontier defenses were not well developed. As a result, the colony of Virginia created and administered a frontier defensive system that included the construction of fortifications and the creation of a colonial military force known as the Virginia Regiment. These initiatives reinforced the construction of residential forts built in 1754 and 1755 and the activities of the poorly organized local militia. Following the French and Indian War and Pontiac's War, as settlers moved once again into western Virginia (including what is now West Virginia and Kentucky), they established a locally organized defensive system that consisted of residential forts, military forces composed of volunteers and known as the militia, and a scouting system. This system was later strengthened by the construction of new forts by settlers and militia during Dunmore's War (1774) and the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and by offensive military campaigns such as Andrew Lewis' Point Pleasant campaign and the campaigns of George Rogers Clark and Lochlan McIntosh. Settlement extended into extreme western Virginia (now Kentucky). Still, settlers relied heavily on their local defensive system for protection. Throughout this era forts were at the heart of this defensive system, but other elements were also involved. These included a military force

to protect the forts and engage the enemy, a network of scouts to observe enemy movements, offensive campaigns, and government sponsored peace negotiations (the latter two initiatives were used infrequently). Military force, scouting, and frontier forts within the defensive system are discussed below.

The local militia and scouts

During the frontier period the primary military force was the local county militia, who garrisoned frontier forts and engaged enemy forces. During the French and Indian War these forces were supplemented by the Virginia Regiment. Made up of volunteers and appointed officers, it was divided into companies of men, each under the supervision of a captain. Under the command of Colonel George Washington after August 1755, the Virginia Regiment constructed numerous forts down the Valley of Virginia in present Virginia and West Virginia. During the Revolutionary War the militia was supplemented by Virginia State Line Troops, regular state soldiers who enlisted to serve within the state boundaries and who garrisoned forts on the Ohio River.

The Virginia militia was modeled on an ancient English institution. By the 1620s Virginia had a militia system “that required all free white males to provide their own weapons, keep them in good repair, and attend frequent militia drills” (Cress 1982:4). All free white males aged eighteen to fifty, excepting those with vital occupations, were required to serve. Although the governor was the overall commander, the militia was organized at the county level and led by the county lieutenant whose staff and company officers commanded the men. Each county had at least one regiment that was divided into five to ten companies of approximately twenty to eighty men and officers. The county lieutenant could order the militia to service within the county, but to take his regiments outside of the county he had to ask for volunteers. This often hindered offensive actions because forming a sizeable army of more than 200 to 300 men usually required the assistance of volunteers from adjacent frontier counties (Sosin 1967:106; Stone 1978:13). This geographical limitation of the militia caused much frustration among offensively minded officers.

Due to relatively peaceful conditions in most of Virginia, the local militia system of volunteers did not become well organized until after the French and Indian War. Later, during Dunmore’s War and

the Revolutionary War, local militiamen built and garrisoned local forts as well as the larger forts on the Ohio River. They also participated in military expeditions. Accounts given in pension applications suggest that entire companies would guard a fort for anywhere from a few days to as long as six months. In addition, they participated in a number of offensive campaigns during the 1770s and 1780s. Militia companies were quite mobile and would move from fort to fort. Militiamen also protected farmers planting crops and pursued Indian raiding parties. According to militiaman James Gillilan: "in the summer season [we] would all turn out [from Renick's Fort] in a body and work each others places by turns — whilst some were working others would be watching and guarding — to give alarm of the approach of Indians" (McBride et al. 1996: A.11).

We know from research in Revolutionary War pension applications of Greenbrier Valley area militiamen that the militia of the region also participated in a number of offensive campaigns or raids during the 1770s and 1780s. The most notable were Andrew Lewis' 1774 Point Pleasant Campaign and George Rogers Clark's aborted 1781 Detroit expedition, and forays into Kentucky (McBride et al. 1996: A.2, A.17, A.24).

The use of scouts, or "Indian spies" as they were sometimes called, was another crucial element of the frontier defensive strategy. During the French and Indian War, scouts functioned in an offensive capacity, gathering intelligence about the enemy and attacking them in their camps when possible. Scouting parties often included hired American Indians as well. By the 1770s and 1780s, scouts had become more defensive, roaming over the landscape to look for enemy signs. Given the widely dispersed nature of frontier farms and forts and the desire of most settlers to stay on their farms during the warmer months, only coming into the forts when absolutely necessary, this system was a critical aspect of frontier defense. The Revolutionary War pension application of scout Michael Swope, who lived and operated in the Greenbrier Valley, provides an example of this: "...when [scouts] saw signs of Indians they would fly from Fort to Fort and give the alarm so that preparations might be made for defensive operations by the people that were Forted and that those who had ventured out to work their corn might betake themselves to the Fort before the Indians would attack them..." (McBride et al. 1996: A:24).

We know from the Greenbrier area pensions that many men served in this duty. Their accounts suggest that most scouting was undertaken by small groups of two to three individuals, depending on the circumstances. Some of the scouts were volunteers and others were drafted or ordered out. All scouts seemed to have provided their own clothing and arms and usually food. Spies or scouts seem to have been generally based at a fort, and many were operating in areas near their homes where they were familiar with the terrain. Period accounts describe going out on rounds of four to eight days, with a given circuit of thirty to seventy miles to traverse, perhaps stopping at other forts along the way and returning to the home fort for a rest of a few days. Scouts were generally out when danger was anticipated, which was usually in the spring to fall seasons, or after rumors of Indian movements. Extra scouts were often posted at known passes and advance areas during times of particular danger. In the words of scout John Bradshaw, "such services were not needed in winter, as the Indians kept in their quarters." Bradshaw's statement that he "watched the gaps and low places in the mountains for thirty miles, to a point where they met the spies from Burnside's Fort" suggests that scouts from one fort had a recognized territory (McBride et al. 1996:A.3).

Forts within the defensive system

As mentioned above, scouts were often based at a particular fort (or station, an alternate name used by some settlers). The concept of community forts is also ancient and one that settlers of many nationalities brought with them to the New World. Most settlers of the western Virginia regions were likely familiar with both log blockhouses and wooden stockaded forts. This was particularly true after the post-1768 settlement. By the 1770s the fortification system of the Trans-Allegheny regions was well established. This system consisted initially of privately built forts, and after the spring of 1774, of both private and militia built forts. The national importance of forts/stations is evidenced by their prominence on Fry and Jefferson's 1755 Map of Virginia, or nearly thirty years later, Filson's 1784 Map of Kentucky.

Besides their function to protect settlers, as well as garrison soldiers or militia, forts were usually located in the center of a settlement cluster or neighborhood. They were often built by, or on the land of, a prominent settler who may have donated land and materi-

als, or supervised construction to gain prestige as well as defense. Forts were always near a permanent water source such as a spring or creek and they were usually on a ridge or terrace, high, but not too high for settlers to reach. They were also on or near trails or roads.

Forts were quite numerous. For example, we know of at least thirty-two private or militia built forts for the Greenbrier Valley region of West Virginia by the Revolutionary War, though few were built here during the earliest (unsuccessful) settlement attempts of the 1750s and early 1760s. The distance between forts varied with population density, areas of cleared land, and exposure to danger. The Colony of Virginia's official French and Indian War "Line of Forts" were placed every fifteen to twenty-six miles, but there were also private forts spaced between these. In the Greenbrier Valley, forts were located three to ten miles apart during the Revolution. Randolph County settler David Crouch stated that "In Tygarts Valley [W. Va.] the forts were not more than 4, 5, or 6 miles apart. There were some 10 or 12 forts. All of the forts were stockaded, with bastions for the sentries to stand in at night." (Crouch 1841).

These forts were added to a very simplified frontier landscape that consisted of dispersed farmsteads, trails or roads, river landings, and perhaps a store or trading post. Farmsteads tended to be clustered in stream (usually creek) valleys, or in karst (limestone spring) areas called "Sinks" or "Levels." Frontier Western Virginia initially lacked towns or other strong central places. Entrepôts were to be found in the Shenandoah Valley and the east. To the settlers, further west, surrounding it was wilderness — the domain of wild animals and Indians. During times of conflict, the forts protected the Euro-American settlers and their landscape from the encroachment of Indians and the wilderness. Sometimes, much of the landscaping immediately outside of forts reverted to wilderness (or aboriginal control) for a period. Farmsteads, agricultural fields, livestock, and travelers could all be destroyed. (Nash 1982, Slotkin 1993, Smith 1950, Stilgoe 1982)

Since the forts or stations were the primary, if not the only, central places on the landscape, they took on many non-defensive functions, including commerce, a place for political meetings and court proceedings, church, school, mechanical services, and social events like dances or weddings. As social historian Elizabeth Perkins (1998:66) states:

Although their time of occupation was often very brief, fortified stations were important conceptual nodes in settlers' cognitive landscapes. Settlers reckoned distances from stations and placed events in regard to their location; they distinguished between "inside stations" or "outside stations" based on their vulnerability to Indian attack. The influence of stations radiated beyond their stockade walls; even after the end of "troublesome times," when residents "settled out" on individual farms, stations gave rise to neighborhoods...which today still retain their original names.

As spaces of security and enclosure, stations also defined a gendered landscape of an expansive male and a narrow female geographic experience. While men ranged widely on hunting or military expeditions, women and children, for fear of Indian attack, remained largely restricted to the fortified compounds or the fields and gardens surrounding their walls. "A woman dare not go 40 yards to pick beans without a guard," John Dyal observed of the settlements along Beargrass Creek.

Perkins (1998:78) goes on to state, "In reading over hundreds of interviews with surviving Ohio Valley settlers, one is struck that migrants often employed a distinctive special metaphor—the concept of "in and out"—to encompass their basic arrangement of social space. Born in the *interior* settlements, settlers came *out* to the Ohio Valley, lived *in* fortified communities called *inside* stations or *outside* stations, *settled out* when it was safe."

This "in" and "out" distinction is also found in other documents, such as a 1774 letter from Abram Hites to Col. William Preston regarding Lord Dunmore's War. "An Indian War is commenced, and the Out Inhabitants are all forting or fleeing in [emphasis added]." The distinction is also made by David Crouch, speaking of events in Randolph County, West Virginia: "Nobody was forted up at the time we speak of. All living out, till the season when the Indians would become troublesome, which was almost always in the spring, just about corn planting time" (Crouch 1841).

Living within these forts or stations may seem strange to us today, but it was normal to many of the eighteenth century settlers. Jane Stevenson of Woodford, County, Kentucky, recalled that she "was forted [in Virginia as well as in Kentucky] from the time I was seven years old, 1757, and was never rid of the Indians, until I moved to this place [in 1784]. David Crouch (1841) of Virginia stated that "We were forted almost till I was a grown man."

For most settlers, forting was highly seasonal, as described by Revolutionary War Pensioner Samuel Gwinn as follows.

A Year or two after the last preceding service I moved to the County of Monroe with my wife and two children, lived at Thompsons Fort for a year or two and then moved to a blockhouse, finally to Vanbibbers Fort — at those places I fortified in the summer month. In the Winter I returned to my cabin, and devoted the winter to hunting. All the people of the settlements took their families to the forts in the summer months — where we farmed pretty much in common would turn out all in a body and work each others corn and potato patches by turns whilst we would be working some would be watching for Indians and worked and watched by turns. (McBride et al. 1996:13-14)

According to Revolutionary War Pensioner John Day, Sr., The Indians would mostly leave that part in the fall, and the people would then move home out of the forts, and in the spring the Indians would return and do mischief in the frontiers, and the people would fort (McBride et al. 1996:5-7). An interesting commentary on a sense of regional attachment to a fort site is provided in the memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Doddridge (1824:94-95). "My reader will understand by this term [fort], not only a place of defense, but the residence of a small number of families belonging to the same neighborhood...The families *belonging to these forts* [emphasis added] were so attached to their own cabins on their farms, that they seldom move into the fort in the spring until compelled by some alarm, as they called it. Thus it often happened that the whole number of families *belonging to a fort* [emphasis added] who were in the evening at their homes were all in their little fortress before the dawn of the next morning."

The Structure of Frontier Forts

But what did these crucial structures look like? Limited documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that fort design could vary considerably, depending on the builder, its purpose, and its location. During the French and Indian War, Virginia's frontier forts were built by their colonial troops, the Virginia Regiment, county militia, and by private citizens. The Virginia Regiment forts were supposed to follow strict designs laid out by its commander, Colonel George Washington. In 1755, Washington ordered Lt. John Bacon to build Fort Ashby on Patterson Creek as follows: "You are to make choice of the most convenient Ground, and direct them in building a Quadrangular Fort of Ninety feet, with Bastions. You will direct them in what part of the Fort to build their Barracks, and the most convenient part of a Magazine." (Abbott 1983 Vol 2:137)

In 1756 a Council of War was held at the Augusta, County, Virginia, court house, and it was ordered that "...Fort Vanse (Vass) be made at least one hundred feet square in the clear; and that the stockades be at least fourteen feet long; that all the other forts be made 60 feet square with two bastions in each fort." (Koontz 1925:101)

Except for a few regular military forts on the Ohio River, frontier forts of the 1770s and 1780s did not have the centralized control of the Virginia Regiment forts. They were built by the county militia or by private citizens. Probably because of this, the Virginia forts of this era are less well documented than those of the 1750s. There are a few brief descriptions, such as Crouch's mentioned above. Two generalized descriptions of model forts are very instructive.

According to the Rev. Joseph Doddridge (1824:94)

The fort consisted of cabins, blockhouses, and stockades. A range of cabins commonly formed one side, at least, of the fort. Divisions or partitions of logs separated the cabins from each other. The blockhouses were built at angles of the fort. They projected about two feet beyond the outer walls of the cabins and stockades. In some forts, instead of blockhouses, the angles of the fort were furnished with bastions. A large folding gate made of thick slabs, nearest the spring, closed the fort. In some places less exposed a single blockhouse, with a cabin or two, constituted the whole fort.

A wonderfully detailed description was provided in 1842 by Spencer Records (recorded in the Draper Manuscripts (22CC95-97).

As I have mentioned forts and fortifying, I will for the information of those that never saw a stockade fort, describe one, and lay down a plat thereof. In the first place, the ground is cleared off, the size they intend to build the fort, which was an oblong square. Then a ditch was dug, three feet deep, the dirt being thrown out on the inside of the fort. Logs, twelve or fifteen inches in diameter and fifteen feet long, were cut and split open. The top ends were sharpened, the butts set in the ditch with the flat sides all in, and the cracks broke with the flat sides of other[s]. The dirt was then thrown into the ditch and well rammed down. Port-holes were made high enough that if a ball should be shot in, it would pass overhead. The cabins were built far enough from the stockades to have plenty of room to load and shoot. Two bastions were constructed at opposite corners with port-holes about eighteen inches from the ground. The use of these bastions was to rake the two sides of the fort, should the Indians get close up to the stockades, so that they could not shoot them from the port-holes in the sides. Two gateways were made fronting each other with strong gates and bars so that they could not be forced open. Some forts had a bastion at each corner.

Insights from Archaeology

How closely military orders or common building traditions were followed at specific fort sites is unclear, and archaeology can help provide the details that are missing from the documentary record. Features that were dug into the ground, such as trenches to place stockade logs in, leave a dark stain that is typically easy to see once the topsoil is removed and the deposits are excavated down to the typically lighter colored subsoil. For example, archaeological excavations at Fort Ashby, West Virginia, revealed just this staining from stockade trenching, and suggest that the builders took some liberties and that the fort was altered over time. One circular bastion and overlapping stockade lines were revealed by the excavations. (McBride, McBride and Adamson 2003)

Several fort sites we have excavated in recent years provide significant insight into fort design and construction. The sites we will highlight here include Fort Edwards, a French and Indian War site in present day Hampshire County, West Virginia; Fort Vause, a French and Indian War fort in Montgomery County, Virginia; and Arbuckle's Fort and Fort Donnally in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, both Revolutionary War era forts.

French and Indian War Examples: Fort Edwards and Fort Vause

Private forts built in the 1750s were more variable and likely included small stockades and single strong log or stone houses, called block-houses. Archaeological excavations at the privately built Fort Edwards, Hampshire County, West Virginia, have revealed a dwelling house surrounded by a stockade that includes a 10-foot mid-wall bastion (or redan) and a 25-foot corner bastion (**Figure 1**) (McBride 2005). Both bastions have central postmold stains suggesting that raised gun platforms were present. The sections of stockade trench exposed so far suggest that the fort was 107 feet long (east-west) and 71 feet wide (north-south). The stockade trench at Fort Edwards was generally 18 to 24 inches wide and 2 to 2.5 feet deep with generally 8 to 10 inch diameter round posts within it, although a few smaller (4 inch) posts were also present. **Figure 2** shows an unusually clear post outline within a section of stockade trench. One interesting feature of this stockade was an extra section extending toward and protecting the spring.

Besides the stockade, other French and Indian War structural features discovered at Fort Edwards included Joseph Edwards' 28

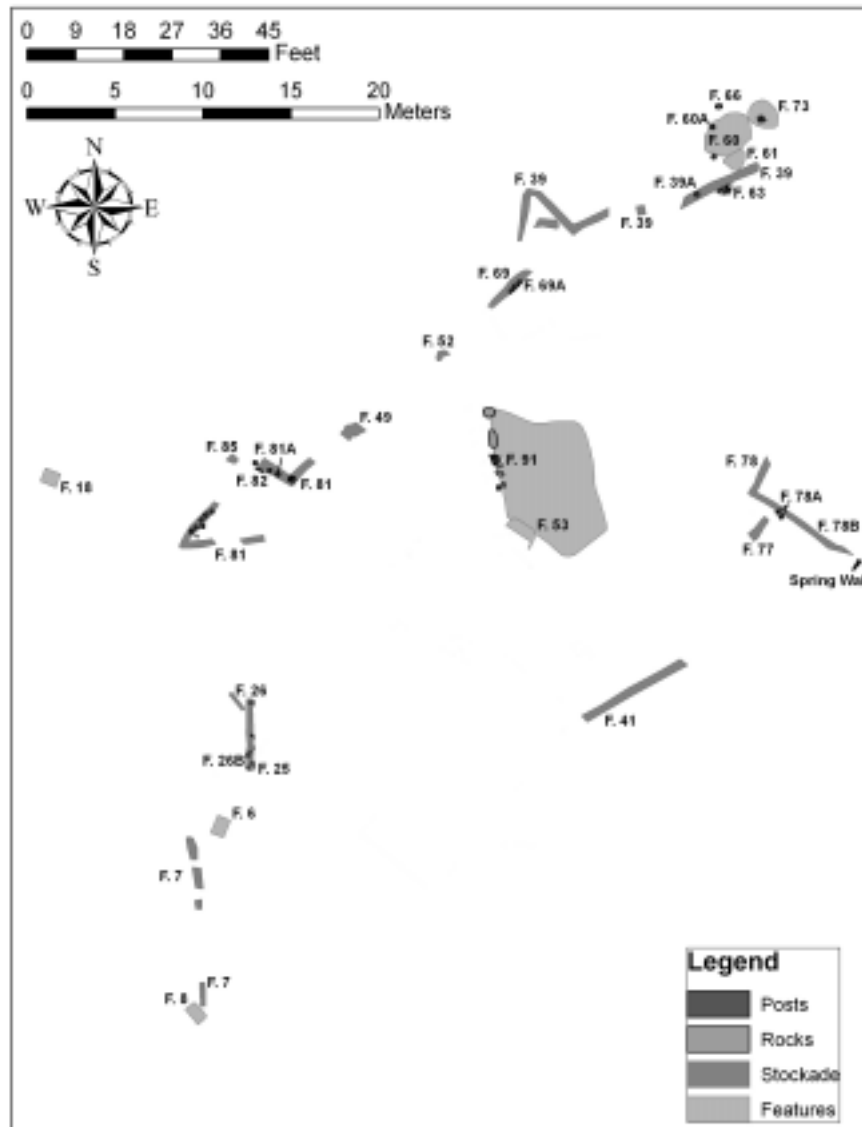


Figure 1

feet by 16 feet house foundation (Feature 91) and cellar (Feature 53) located within the stockade, two possible soldier hut pits (9 by 8 feet and 7 by 6 feet) (Features 60 and 73) located just outside the stockade, and two root cellars or trash pits (Features 6 and 7). The possible huts and root cellars produced exclusively French and Indian War artifacts, including a musket gunflint, delftware, a wrought grid-iron, brass buttons, and animal bone.

The other French and Indian War fort we will discuss is Fort



Figure 2

Vause, in Montgomery County, Virginia. Its construction was very different from that of Fort Edwards, as it was an earthen fort. This fort was built in 1756 by the Virginia Regiment and county militia to replace Ephraim Vause's original private fort which had been destroyed in 1755. The destruction of the first Fort Vause and its position in a very important and strategic mountain gap likely led the Virginia Regiment to construct a stronger earthen fort as its replacement. (Eddie Goode, personal communication 2006; Koontz 1925)

Archaeological investigations in 2005 and 2006 indicate that the second Fort Vause had four earthen corner bastions, each about 40 feet across and connected to each other by 80 foot long walls. **Figure 3** illustrates the topographic relief apparent today from this construction. Exactly how the bastions and walls were constructed is unclear at present. Our excavation trenches crossing likely areas for the walls did not reveal evidence of vertical or horizontal log or post revetment (bracing). We did find that clay and sod were placed on top of the original ground surfaces to build up the bastions in the corners.

No other French and Indian War features such as foundations

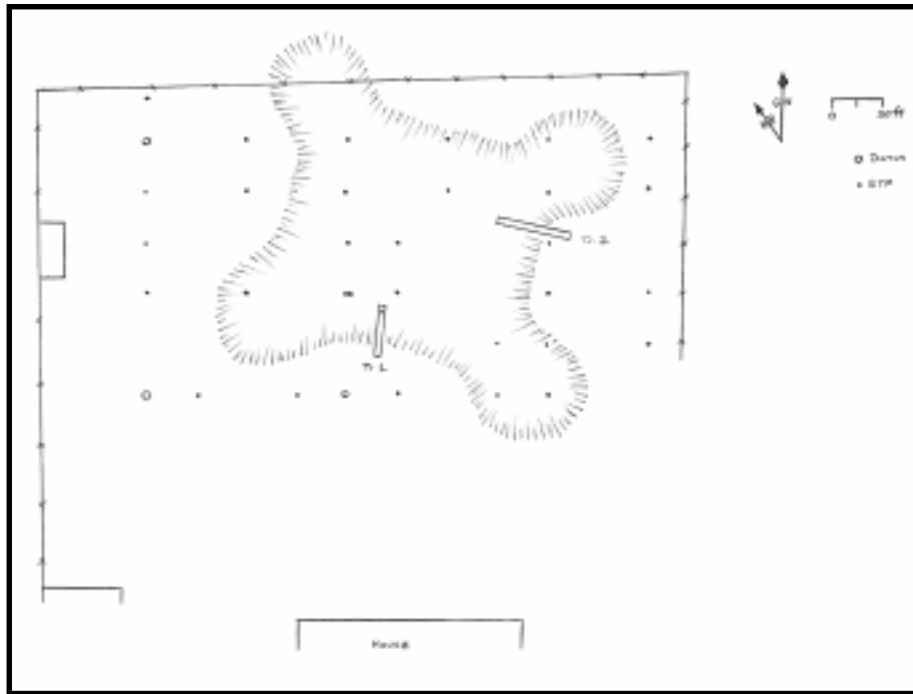


Figure 3

or pits were discovered in our excavations at Fort Vause, but a nice refuse midden was found beneath the western bastion's clay fill. The presence of this midden, and its absence in the southern bastion, suggests that the southern bastion was built first, and the fort's western area was used as a habitation area before the fort was completed. A report on these excavations is in progress.

Revolutionary War Examples: Arbuckle's Fort and Fort Donnally

Archaeological excavations of the militia-built Arbuckle's Fort in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, indicates that it was a fairly academic two-bastioned, four-sided fort with 110 to 120 foot long walls. It did have an inside blockhouse and two internal stockade lines, however (**Figure 4**). The purpose of the internal stockade lines are unclear, but they may have been an extra defensive line or space divider. The fort also contained a blacksmith shop, an outdoor cooking area, a storage cellar or magazine and at least one other dwelling. (McBride et al. 2003)

The stockade trenches at Arbuckle's Fort are generally 18 inches wide and 2 to 2.5 feet deep. Interestingly, the post molds within the stockade trench indicate that the stockade was constructed of longer (6 to 10 inch diameter) posts with smaller, shallower (3 to 4 inch

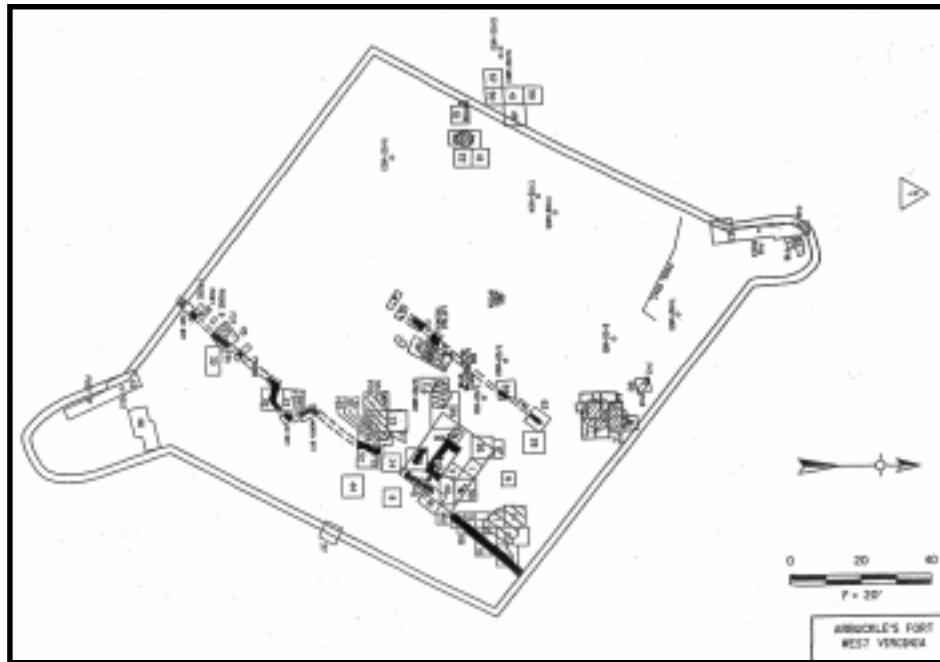


Figure 4

diameter) posts placed between the larger ones to fill in gaps. Also, excavation of the stockade trench indicates that daub (sun dried clay) was also used to fill in gaps between the posts. Gaps in the stockade line indicate gates, the larger opening midway along the northwestern wall being 5 feet (**Figure 5**) and the smaller opening midway

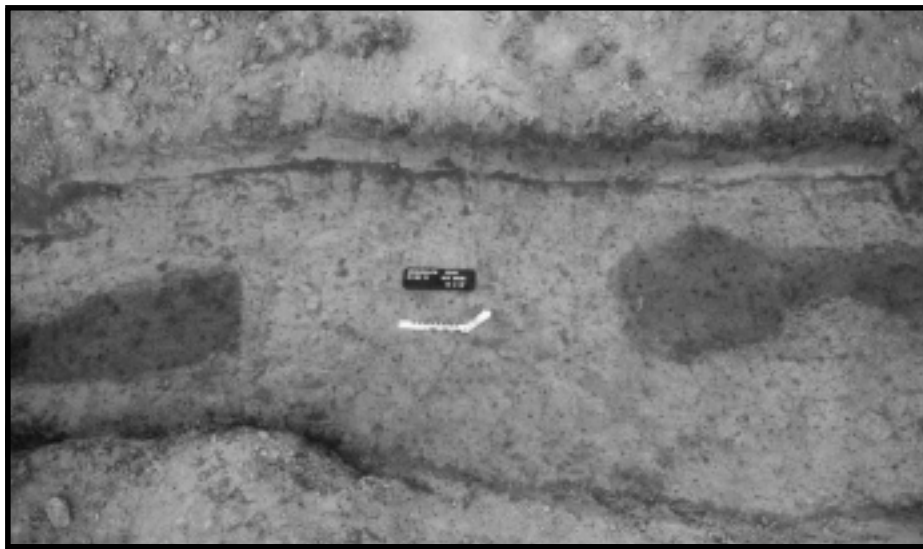


Figure 5

along the southeastern wall being 3 feet. Likely the larger opening was meant to accommodate a wagon.

Architecturally, the Arbuckle's Fort blockhouse is quite interesting and, so far, unique. It was constructed on a stone foundation 20 by 16 feet with a large (11 by 5 feet) central chimney. There was so little room around the chimney that the first floor could not have been used for habitation, but rather only for cooking. The habitation area was certainly in the second story, which support post molds suggest was larger than the first story.

The best documented fort in our primary study area, the Greenbrier Valley of West Virginia, is Fort Donnally. This privately built fort was the scene of a major Indian attack in 1778, and descriptions of the attack sometimes also describe the fort. For example, Capt. John Stuart (1820) says that "The house composed one part of the front of the fort and was double." He also mentions a bastion and an outside barn. Writer Anne Royalle (1826) gave a similar description of Fort Donnally, saying that "Col. Donnally's house made a part of the fort, the front of it forming a line with the same, the door of the house being the door of the fort." In recent archaeological excavations at Fort Donnally (McBride and McBride 2006) we uncovered a large stone double chimney and stone house piers, confirming Stuart's and Royalle's description of Donnally's house.

The historic descriptions of the fort were then utilized to help find the fort's stockade, since we knew it intersected the house. The stockade was 82 by 90 feet with two 10 by 10 foot square bastions at the northern and southern corners (**Figure 6**) and a 16-foot gate opening along the northeastern wall (**Figure 7**). Donnally's house/kitchen was very large (67 by 40 feet) for the time and was situated in the eastern corner of the fort, and therefore served as a corner blockhouse. Other late eighteenth century features discovered include a large (15 by 15 foot) cellar behind Donnally's house and two 4 to 5 feet circular pits near the western corner of the fort (**Figure 7**). The function of the pits is uncertain, but they may have been storage pits or even privies.

Forts in the Contemporary Landscape

Some forts, being central places and well located in terms of trails and roads, developed into towns. In some cases the names are preserved, like in the modern town of Fort Ashby, West Virginia. In most



Figure 6

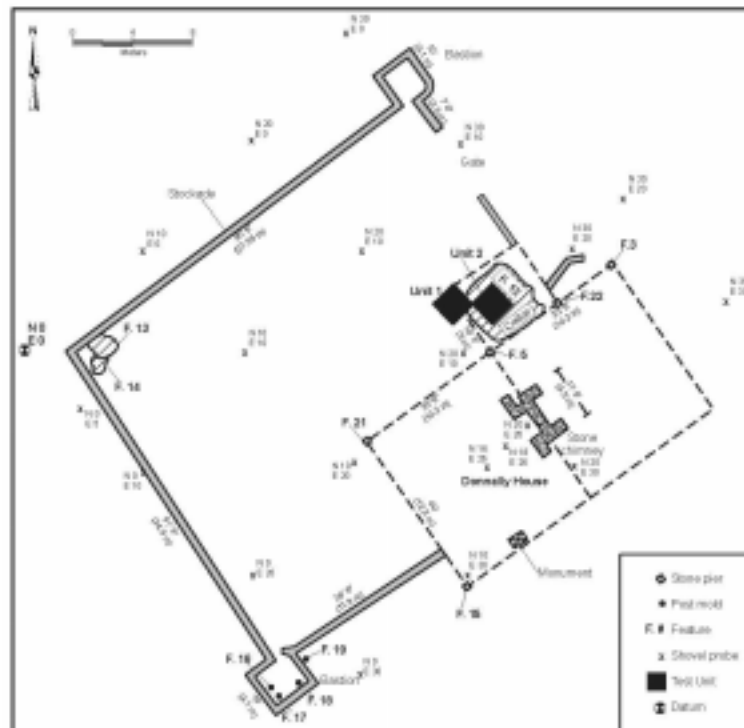


Figure 7

of these cases the fort sites are rebuilt upon, which destroys the fort deposits or adds other materials to complicate site interpretation.

Those forts that were private forts/residences typically remained residences after the period of hostility was over. They would have quickly lost their stockades. These sites are also complex, but discrete features from the forting period, especially the stockade and other subsurface features, can survive alongside later depositions.

Very few original Virginia fort structures have survived, either in present day Virginia or within the boundaries of West Virginia or Kentucky, still part of Virginia during the fort building period. Some stone houses supposedly used as a blockhouse or strong house have survived. But since most forts were made of wood, and have undergone complex historical transformations after the eighteenth century, there is a low expectation of survival. Exceptions exist, such as a remnant from the blockhouse known as McCoy's Fort we were recently directed to in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. In this case, portions of the original log structure and the chimney base have survived by incorporation into a more recent barn. But since many of the forts were strictly defensive forts, they were abandoned once the need for protection passed, with any serviceable building materials salvaged for use in other structures.

Despite this lack of physical surviving forts in the present landscape, the concept of the frontier fort retains much significance and generates much interest. Even in the early nineteenth century, efforts were made to record the frontier history. Examples include, on a national scale, the collecting of Lyman Draper and Dabney Shane, utilized above. At the regional level, we see the writings of local historians such as Rev. Joseph Doddridge, in 1824, also utilized above, or Alexander Withers in 1831, or at the local level, Anne Royalle's 1826 discussion of Fort Donnally and Fort Savannah, in Greenbrier County, West Virginia.

Interest in frontier fort sites grew strong again in the early twentieth century. Perhaps the intervening lull in the mid- to late-nineteenth century was due to emphasis on the American Civil War. In the early twentieth century, monuments/markers to fort sites were erected by local historical societies, or articles begin to appear in local newspapers and historical society publications. One way that forts—now mostly fort sites—are prominent in the contemporary

landscape is via highway markers. When historical highway markers began to be established, frontier forts ranked high among the types of sites initially represented. For example, in Kentucky, seventeen of the initial set of 175 markers erected between 1949 and 1962 were honoring forts or stations. Later another sixty fort markers were erected, making a total of seventy-seven out of a grand total of 1,400 total markers. (Wells and Madigan 1985) Seventy-six frontier fort highway markers have been erected in West Virginia, of a grand total of 820 highway markers. (Adams 1998)

The most obvious, and prominent way that the forts are memorialized and celebrated in the modern landscape are via physical reconstructions. These constructions are sometimes very hypothetical in terms of accuracy, taking guidance as much from nineteenth century western forts as real knowledge of the interpreted site's real structure. Yet their point as a tribute remains clear, and most of these sites host reenactment events and in other ways celebrate frontier history.

Two examples in southwestern Virginia are the recently reconstructed Anderson Blockhouse in Scott County and Martin's Station, in Lee County. Both are on the Wilderness Trail and are linked with Virginia to Kentucky migration along this road and through the Cumberland Gap. Anderson Blockhouse was an important staging point for migration parties, while Martin's Station, just east of the Cumberland Gap near Ewing, was more of a halfway point. It is part of the Wilderness Road State Park. Both sites are part of the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail network of historic sites, which encourages visitation. In West Virginia the state constructed and runs Prickett's Fort State Park, near Fairmont. In Kentucky, the prime examples are Fort Harrod and Fort Boonesborough, in the central Bluegrass region. Both were reconstructed as state parks many years ago. The opening of Fort Harrod in 1934 was presided over by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. There is current interest in reconstructing the third major fort of station of this region, Logan's Fort, which had been an important central place and developed into the town of Stanford.

What is the appeal of the forts within the contemporary landscape? If they serve as a representation of the past landscape, what do they stand for, or evoke, besides perhaps a generalized romanticized past or the lure of a "simpler time." We think they symbolize a variety of things, varying from person to person. But key among these are the

accomplishments of ancestors, be they recorded acts of bravery or just basic persistence in the face of danger and deprivations. For some they may symbolize the successful colonization of a landscape contested with Native Americans, and perhaps the working out of some sense of manifest destiny of settlement and control, or military success in the establishment of a separate nation. For others perhaps they evoke the beginnings of communal life and society on the frontier, within the context of an individually-oriented historical landscape.

According to scholar John Stilgoe (1982), there was a tension within the early elements of "Civilization," such as forts or farms in the frontier setting. These could all be the elements of "Civilization," the Inside, but Outside, Wilderness, was surrounding them, and they could revert back to wilderness. And while some nineteenth century writers such as Thoreau, Hawthorne, or Emerson made the wilderness healthful, "too many people remembered the wilderness as the objectification of chaotic evil....a great chaos, the lair of wild beasts and wilder men" where people would be be-wildered or seduced into all manner of sin. (Stilgoe 1982:7-8) This perspective adds a deeper complexity to the frontier landscape, and may help explain its contemporary appeal.

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The process of a local history internship (Searching for Mattie Jordan)

by Kimberly McCray
James Madison University intern

In organizing their own archives, members of the Stonewall Brigade Band found a small treasure trove of items at the bottom of an old truck, purchased at auction years ago to house band materials. The band donated the items to the Augusta County Historical Society. The job of organizing the collection and unlocking its hidden story fell to James Madison University student Kim McCray. The entire paper collection consists of twenty-six letters, most to Ms. Jordan, twelve postcards, and twenty-five other paper items including church bulletins, a photograph of an African-American woman, newspaper advertisements, and recipe books. Also included are approximately fifteen personal items such as collectors' spoons, buttons, sewing items, and hair barrettes. The items that can be dated range from 1905 to the late 1930s with the bulk of the items dating from the 1930s.

The Process of a Local History Internship

During the spring and summer of 2006, I worked as an intern for Lot's Wife Publishing and the Augusta County Historical Society. At the outset of this partnership, I was handed a small box containing a variety of documents and material items, the contents of which was believed to have belonged to a member of our local community. After a quick examination of the collection, I discovered that the community member was Mattie Jordan, an African-American woman who lived in downtown Staunton from the early 1900s through the late 1930s. Based on this initial assessment of the collection, I developed a list of goals for my internship. Included in this list were the specifics of what I wanted to learn about Mattie Jordan's life, how I intended to look for the information I needed, and how I was going to organize and document the physical contents of the collection itself. In order to meet these goals, I needed to hone my documentary editing and archival procedural skills, while also obtaining an under-

standing of local history research methodology. I wanted not only to learn about the life of Mattie Jordan, but also how historians go about researching the unknown figures of our past and presenting their material possessions for future examination. The procedure that I followed in the completion of my project was for the most part developed as I went along, teaching me a great deal about the challenges and rewards of “doing” local history.

The first step, after the preliminary run-through of what was inside the box, was to go through the collection in further detail in the hope of developing a more complete idea of what exactly I was working with. The first thing that I noticed was that the items were not arranged in any logical order, and I decided that it would be in the best interest of this particular collection to arrange the dated documents in chronological order. I found the majority of the documents to be letters, with a hodgepodge representation of postcards, church bulletins, receipts, prescriptions, advertisements, dress patterns, and several recipe booklets. Some documents had been kept intact, neatly folded in their envelopes, while others were torn or missing pages. There was a total of sixty-eight documents in the collection. The years on the dated documents ranged from 1900 to 1938, with the majority from the 1930s. The authors of the letters varied greatly, but the recipient was always Mattie Jordan with two exceptions. In addition to the documents, the collection also contained some material items: hair barrettes, coins, souvenir spoons, buttons, a thimble, and a cigarette package.

After an examination of the original documents and material items, I next made photocopies of the originals in order to protect the aged documents from the damage of frequent handling and the exposure to the elements. Although most of the documents were in fairly good condition, some were notably dry and brittle, and the dangers of hand oil, tears, sunlight, and dust could only serve to harm the condition of the paper. Making copies of the documents also allowed me to enlarge and darken some of the handwritten selections that were difficult to make out.

With copies in hand, I next proceeded to catalog every item in the collection. I figured this would not only give me a full list of the items, but would also provide me with a quick reference point whenever I needed to verify information from a particular document. In

creating the catalog, I made a three-column chart, with the columns titled "date," "type," and "description." Under the "type" column, I listed what sort of document it was. For example, "letter," "post-card" or "envelope." Under description, I put down any other pertinent details, typically who wrote it and where the writer was from, and the condition of the document. In addition to cataloging the paper documents, I also listed the material items and described what they were made of, the color, and other identifying characteristics.

Next came the undertaking of transcribing. Before beginning, I created a list of "transcription rules" that guided me through the process and helped create uniformly edited documents. With the exception of the typed documents (which were readable), I typed all of the documents, organizing those with dates into chronological order and those without into a special "undated" section. I was careful to maintain the integrity of the original documents by retaining original spelling and grammar, putting all additional information and clarifications in headings before each document, and never altering the original format. The transcribing was a very tedious task, as some of the handwriting was unclear and varied a great deal from one writer to the next. However, the process of transcription proved essential because it not only made the collection more accessible for future use, but also familiarized me with the contents of the documents.

After I finished the transcriptions, I took the necessary step of meeting with the coordinator of the Augusta County Historical Society archive, Doug Harmon, because that was where my collection and project notebook were ultimately to be housed. At this informative meeting, we went over the essential archival forms that must be filled out before any new item or collection is added to the archive. Included in this set of forms are an "Accession Form," which analyzes the initial condition and contents of a collection, and a "Finding Guide," which serves to allow someone quickly to locate the collection and obtain a summary of its contents. I left my box at the archive for proper storage, allowing its contents to be properly cared for and stored for future research purposes.

For my first attempt at research outside of my collection, I met with one of my internship supervisors at the Staunton City Courthouse in an effort to look at records and hopefully find Mattie Jordan's name in the listings. We were there for about an hour and looked

La Rambo, Va.
March 25th 1901
Mr. L
Dear Mattie,
I received
your kind and welcome
letter some time ago and
I would have answered
it but I have been
very busy. I am well at
present except a sore
throat. I hope you are
well and getting along
nicely. Maria and all
send their best love to
you. I am coming to
Staunton this summer
if I live and nothing

A letter to Mattie Jordan from the collection now housed in the ACHS archives.

through birth and death records, but did not find a single listing for Mattie. I did not realize until this point how difficult it could be to find information on an individual, but the lack of records at the courthouse made it clear. I had done research on a white family at the Page County Courthouse once before, and had no trouble finding information on the individuals I was researching, and foolishly had assumed it would be the same this time. However, I quickly realized that every one of the records was more complete for whites than for blacks, and as such I was not able to verify any vital statistics on Mattie or any of her family members as having lived in Staunton. After this unsuccessful day at the courthouse, I recognized that I was going to have to hunt in order to find information on Mattie Jordan.

My next attempt at finding some record of Mattie Jordan was through two online databases at the library: Rootsweb.com and Ancestry.com. I had had good luck with both in the past, and assumed that I would again. Once again I was foiled. While I did come up with a couple leads that at first appeared to have been the Mattie Jordan I was looking for, further searches told me that the findings were not matches. One problem was that Jordan is a very common name, and so it was hard to limit the results for each search based on the name. Also, while I did find a few Mattie Jordans and Matilda Jordans, the ages were either way off, or the immediate family was not correct, forcing me to discard the results. In one case, a close match for one Mattie Jordan in Staunton showed, but she was listed as having been an inmate for five years! Although this was definitely the closest result as far as the other criteria, I knew it could not possibly be correct because my Mattie Jordan received letters addressed to downtown Staunton residences during the same years that the database's Mattie Jordan was an inmate (probably at Western State Hospital).

After striking out with the databases, I did have some good luck with the old city directories at the library, which was a big relief because I was about to think I was looking for an imaginary person! The library unfortunately did not have all volumes of the directories, but I was able to find Mattie Jordan in all of the directories that the library had with one exception, 1914. All in all, I found Mattie in eight directories between 1896 and 1936. By the 1940 directory, Mattie ceased to be listed, which leads me to believe that by this time she had either passed away or had



Mattie Jordan once lived here at 15 Caroline St.



Mattie Jordan once lived here at 621 North Augusta St.

moved to a new location. The documents in the collection support this assumption, as the last letter is dated 1938. Also included in the directories were the occupations of all citizens, and Mattie was listed at various times as a waitress, a cook, and a maid. By the time I

finished looking at these directories I was very pleased because they allowed me to verify the dates that Mattie lived at certain addresses and also to learn of her occupations, something that I could only hypothesize about based on the collection's letters. It was also important to realize that Mattie was almost always listed as a renter, which helps explain some of the letters written to her which discuss roommates and a receipt of hers for "room and board."

One of the last major things I did for my internship was to go in search for some visual aids for my project, something I accomplished by going around downtown Staunton and taking pictures of Mattie Jordan's old residences and some churches on Augusta Street from which the collection contained documents. Most of the houses where Mattie lived were no longer standing, but a few still remained intact. I took photographs of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, and Augusta Street Methodist Church because I had documents from all of these churches in the collection. It makes sense for Mattie to have attended services and special events at these places of worship because most of Mattie's time in Staunton was spent living on North Augusta Street and Sunnyside Street, in close proximity to the churches. Although I could not find membership records to verify my assumption, I do believe that Mattie attended Augusta Street Methodist Episcopal Church, (today Augusta Street United Methodist Church), at least once in a while, for the vast majority of church-related documents were from there.



Mattie Jordan once lived here at 938 Beverley St.

With the exception of a few other minor attempts at learning more about my subject, my journey of research then wound to a close, with me having learned a good deal about “doing” local history, although not nearly as much as I would have liked about the person who was Mattie Jordan. Researching an individual of Mattie Jordan’s circumstance would have been a challenge in and of itself, but the process was made even more difficult due to various other factors. First of all, Mattie was African-American.. She also was not financially well-off, had parents and siblings who all lived in other cities and states, and was most likely not born in Staunton. She also never married or had any children. This last factor was especially troubling, because it made it impossible for me to trace her through her descendants, who would have been born locally and during times when African-American citizens were better documented in city records. It was also hard to gain an understanding of Mattie’s life based on the documents she left behind because they were written



Mt. Zion Baptist Church

by many different authors at many different times, making it difficult to find any continuation of topic from one letter to the next.

On the positive side, reading the documents was very interesting and enlightening as to the typical concerns and interests of Mattie's contacts, and presumably, Mattie as well. They also helped me figure out the names and relationships of some of Mattie's family members. Also, I definitely came away with a better understanding of the documentary editing process and the steps in processing a collection for inclusion in an archive. Partly as a result of my experience with this



Augusta Street United Methodist Church

internship, I would like to pursue documentary editing and archival work in my post-graduate studies.

As with any other project, at its completion, I now have regrets, and wish that I had done a few things differently. Primarily, I wish that after realizing that it was going to be a challenge to find out specifics about Mattie, I had changed direction and tried to find out more about what her day-to-day life might have been like living in a segregated Staunton during the early twentieth century. I should have interviewed people who lived in Staunton in the time. I now realize that in becoming so caught up in getting the dates and addresses just right, I missed the bigger picture of Mattie's life. I also regret taking so much time up with my transcriptions. Transcribing was a very tedious and tiring undertaking, and as such I took my time at it – using precious moments that could have been used doing something else.



Ebenezer Baptist Church

All in all, I consider this internship to have been a very rewarding experience because it taught me a great deal about researching an individual using sources that I would not usually consider. As a result of most of my history courses, I had become very accustomed to searching for people or events on the internet or in library catalogs, and finding all I needed to know without too much digging. Indeed, before this project, I had rarely ever needed to consult local resources like birth and death records, church membership rolls, or cemetery burial records, and in the few cases when I had used them, I had never before come away empty handed! This was a frustrating reality, but was one that definitely taught me to continue to try various leads and sources if the first attempts do not yield results. I know that I learned a lot from this internship, and now have a better grasp on the real work that historians do. I see that information does not always fall into your lap – you have to dig around for it – but when you find what you’re looking for, it is even more rewarding.

Selected transcriptions from the Mattie Jordan collection

[Document 1] – letter

March 25, 1900

TO: Mattie

FROM: Fannie Nelson Roanoke, Virginia

Dear Mattie,

I received your kind and welcome letter some time ago and I would have answered sooner but I have been very busy, I am well at present except a sore throat. I hope you are

well and geting along nicely. Mama and all sends their best love to you. I am coming to

Staunton this summer if I live and nothing

[page two]

happens. I am anxious to see you again and also all of my friends. Give my best love to Bettie and t[e]ll her that Mama says she must not fool her this time. Give my love to her little girls and tell Bettie she must bring them with her. I am well of the neuralgia but I have the sore throat now. A friend of mine says he knows your Uncle George, He works with him. We are having a lot of marriages here now. I am to play

[page three]

the wedding march for a friend of mine next week. I hope my time will come before I get too old and tough. Our Church is getting along very nicely now, and I hope we will get the same preacher back, he is such a good man. Yes, Mr. Downing is teaching somewhere near Lexington. He has been real sick so his brother says but I think he is better now. He is a very nice man. He won't be here until summer as he teaches school in the winter. Mrs.

Dean sends her best

[page four]

love to you and says you must be sure and write to her. I forgot to get her address I will

get it next time I write to you. Give my love to your roommates and tell them I hope to see them when I come down there. I guess you all want Rev Ryder back again as he is such a nice man.

Well I will close.

Write soon to your true friend,

Fannie Nelson

[Document 3] – typed wedding announcement and calculations

Date of wedding – February 16, 1905

TO: no name given

FROM: Mr. and Mrs. John Adams

Staunton The wedding announcement is an invitation to the wedding of Mary Lewis Adams to Rufus Taylor, held at Mount Zion Baptist Church. (see photograph page three) The reception was held at the bride's home on Greenville Avenue.

This wedding announcement has many handwritten numbers on the back which appear to be yearly dates. The dates begin in 1899 and go up to 1912, then skip to 1920 and continue through 1939.

[Document 9] – letter

December 4, 1920, Sunday

TO: "My Dear Sister"

FROM: name not given. Lexington, Kentucky

Page one of a letter – missing following page(s)

My Dear Sister,

I guess you will be surprised to hear from me I think of you so

often and written you quite few letters and you never answered them but I love you and will write once and while I am real well trust that you are well and getting a long niceley what are you *drawing* these days working hard I suspose Well Xmas is all most here I am not ready for it Will be thankfull if I am living I had letter from Mother last Week she was not so well her health is bad and she getting old has lots to

Envelope

From: no address given

To: Miss Mattie Jordan

406 N. Augusta St.

Staunton Va City

Letter

Dear Miss Mattie:

Just a few lines I hope they find you well and in the best of health. Listen Miss Mattie I will pay you that money real soon. I have gone back to work at Chris's Restaurant again. I wrote you while I was down in Florida I would have sent you the money then when I had it but I did not hear

[page two]

from you. But you said you did not get the letter there is something wrong because I really did write you. But I will pay you real soon now. I would like to see you some time next week in private I have something very important to tell you. Please let me know when and where I can see you. I really mean to do the

[page three]

right thing so don't you worry and pay any attention to what people say because you know how some of these people are in Staunton and how they talk. But I am going to pay you your money right away. Please write me to the address below.

I remain as ever.

Yours respectfully

B.B. Parke

c/o Chris Resturant

Staunton, Va.

TO: My Dear Sister

FROM: Mattie Jordan, #4 Point St.

This is a very important and unique document in the collection because it is the only piece that is written by Mattie Jordan herself. Unfortunately, the letter is hard to comprehend due to poor handwriting.

My Dear sister

Just a few line[s] let you know I am thinking of you I am just fine hope you and your husband are well I wont [want] too go to Coovgton [Covington] in september if I get off times is so hard now when you got Jobes[jobs].

[page two]

[in top margin], 2

you will *hopelin* keepe it give my best love to your son and his wife we are haveing some

hot weither here

[page three]

[in top margin], 3

the lady that I leved [lived] with dyeid so I had to look for roomer somew[h]ere go go[sic] I am living #4 Point St wri[t]e and tell me all nesw[sic] wret soon

Mattie Jordan

#4 Point St.

[Document 21] – letter and envelope with two cent stamp enclosed
January 4, 1935

To: Miss Mattie Jordan, Sunny Side St.

From: Eliza Jordan,
Covington, Virginia

Considering that this letter ends so abruptly, it is likely that at
least another page is missing.

envelope

From: 330 E Locust St.

Covington, Va

Eliza Jordan

To: Miss Mattie Jordan

201 Sunny Side St.

Staunton Va

letter

My Dear Daughter.

Your Loving letter rec. [*received*] all ways glad to hear from you.
But my Dear Child So Sorry about your Arm. I do trust that your
arm is much better. I am so Sorry about your hurting it again. I am
very well I am thankful to Say. I was So glad to hear from you. *If*rom
& family are all well Altheha [*Alathea*] & family is well. I hed [*heard*]
from Virginia She is well & when I herd fm [*from*] Ella She was well
all so her Boy James he was well he is Married & doing nicely. have
Some very Sweet Children. Ella Married a Mr. Spinner you Know.
She Live in Laing W.Va is her adress Ella Spinner She Looked real
[sic] when I Saw her Last a fine Looking woman.

Montgomery Hall Park turns sixty years old

by *Daily News Leader* writers

*In 2006, Staunton's Montgomery Hall Park turned sixty. While that anniversary is a milestone in and of itself, the park's history is much richer. In an era of segregation, the park was one of only two African-American parks in Virginia. As such it was a beacon of light for African-Americans in the area and far beyond. This past year the **Daily News Leader** in Staunton produced a special section highlighting the park's history. The articles and many of the photos from that section have been reproduced here.*

Another world: Montgomery Hall Park, was a segregated haven during Jim Crow era

Opinions expressed in this feature represent the majority opinion of the newspaper's editorial board, consisting of: Roger Watson, president and publisher; David Fritz, executive editor; Cindy Corell, city editor; Jim McCloskey, advertising sales representative & editorial cartoonist; Dennis Neal, opinion page editor; and Macon Rich, production director.)

The Jim Crow South was not the magnanimous “separate but equal” duality that guilty white apologists like to portray it. The sheer expense of building and maintaining such a double system would have strained any government’s resources much less the poorer municipalities of the South. Sure, there were black and white public schools, but the black schools got textbooks, desks and equipment only when the white schools upgraded and passed down their old stuff. The white doctor may have had two doors leading to his office—one with “White” painted above it, the other marked “Colored,” and mirror-image waiting rooms separated by a wall—but the white patients were attended to first. If blacks were lucky enough to have a “Colored” water fountain to quench their thirst, it was broken more times than not. Restaurants, hotels, and department store soda fountains and lunch counters were strictly off limits, although commercial establishments were as happy to take black people’s money as they were those of white customers—just as city



government expected black citizens to pay the same taxes as whites even if they did not receive equal service.

And then there were the parks.

During most of its Jim Crow era, Staunton, like most cities, had only one: Gypsy Hill Park, for whites only except for one day out of the year when the gates were magnanimously thrown open to the city's black citizens.



*Thanks goes to Larry Vickers who gathered the historic photographs found on these pages and gave the historical society permission to use them in the **Bulletin**. A CD featuring more Montgomery Hall photographs can be found in the historical society archives.*



Then, in 1946, something amazing happened. The city of Staunton bought 150 acres of land carved from the former estate of prominent white statesman, attorney, and military man John Howe Peyton. The land was purchased so Staunton's black residents could have recreational facilities of their own. Whether this act of generosity was genuine, or if it sprang from latent guilt about white Staunton's high-handed treatment of its black residents, the desire to keep blacks otherwise occupied instead of dwelling on society's other disparities, or most likely, to further forestall integration of white facilities has not been recorded. Whatever the motive, the black community embraced the opportunity and created a committee made up of black community leaders who maintained the park.

Gazing at the photos of Montgomery Hall Park from those by-gone days, one is struck by a sense of familiarity and recognition. There are children frolicking around swing sets, tuxedo-clad and evening-gowned teenagers dancing in a ballroom, bathing beauties posing by the pool, snazzily attired adults enjoying one another's company—and a strong beverage or two.

In other words, these snapshots are no different from those you will find in any white family album spanning the period of the 1950s and 1960s.

During a period in Staunton's history when its black residents were less than welcome and certainly separate but unequal, Montgomery Hall Park was a refuge. It didn't matter if you were a kid, a cleaning lady, a bus driver or a prominent doctor or lawyer; the park was a place where children could play, teenagers could flirt and adults could rest their weary feet or enjoy a softball game.

Today, Montgomery Hall Park is just the lesser of the city's two parks, open to all. But once upon a time it was another world — a place where Staunton's black citizens could escape from the sometimes fearful and dreary one many of them occupied during the working week.

If you haven't already, come back with us and visit this world; we're sure you'll see yourself or someone you know reflected back at you in the photos on these pages.

Historic park holds lessons for better future
(by Cindy Corell)

Eicky B. Woodson Jr. stood crying in the hallway while his father

leaned his tall frame down to look into the child's face. Nearly forty years later, he remembers his father's words. "He told me they were going to 'place' me in the fifth grade," Eicky Jr. said. "He said that from here on out, he wanted me to earn anything I was given, but it was up to me to decide."

It was 1967. The father and son were at the Augusta County School Board to dispute the fact that the boy had failed the fourth grade. He and the rest of the black students had only entered integrated public schools the year before. Though he didn't believe he couldn't do the work to pass to the fifth grade, he agreed to repeat the fourth-grade year. Being "placed" sounded wrong, he said.

"My father told me, 'You became a man today.'"

Eicky Jr. told me that story Saturday as we stood at Montgomery Hall Park during the park's sixtieth anniversary celebration. He and Sherrie Harden, her daughter, Shante, twenty, and their four-year-old son, William, were among several hundred people who turned out on a hot Saturday afternoon. They celebrated the park's past as a beacon for the black community before integration, and as a beautiful place to just enjoy a day.

I had asked Eicky Jr. what he wanted the park to look like in the future, what he wanted for William.

"What I'm looking at and seeing is people of all colors out here enjoying themselves," he said. "It should be like this every day, not just on special occasions, not just on Sundays after church, but every day. This is people working together to make the community better."

When Eicky repeated the fourth grade at Beverley Manor that year, he got a new teacher. Her name was Mrs. Bowman and she'd moved here from North Carolina. When the other teachers took their classes to Gypsy Hill Park for picnics or other special days, Mrs. Bowman took her students to Montgomery Hall Park.

"She told us that this was a place created for blacks, and for a long time, this was the only place they could go," Eicky Jr. said. "It meant a whole lot to me."

In his first three years at the black school on Cedar Green Road, Eicky Jr. prepared for the day that the schools would be open to all. Recess and fun times were shortened for lessons. "Those teachers, they said you could play later. Now you had to learn. You had to be prepared."

And prepared they were, though integration changed much



more than where they attended classes. The black families had more opportunities, so formerly white businesses and parks filled up. The predominantly black spots weren't as crowded. Over time, black businesses had to fight for success. Montgomery Hall Park attendance dropped off.

This weekend is a wonderful example of what can be — people of all races moving together on the black-and-white dance floor.

Tomorrow can be even better.

That's the wish of event organizers like Larry Vickers and Thelma Newman. "If you think of events we can have up here, let us know," Thelma told me Saturday.

That's the wish of parents like Eicky Woodson Jr. who remember the heartache of having to fit into a different world.

That's the wish, I'm sure, left by Eicky Woodson Sr., a minister and community leader who desperately wanted all children to work hard and then enjoy their achievements without worrying about something as silly as the color of their skin.

"I think it's in 1st Samuel, where it says humans look at outward appearances, but God doesn't," Eicky Jr. said. "That's what my father would have said. He would say there's not black and white in heaven."

But perhaps most importantly is the wish of a four-year-old named William who patiently waited while his parents talked to me — waiting to go enjoy a glorious and beautiful park built for fun. He had a simple and no-nonsense answer when I asked him his plans for Saturday.

"Play."

Good idea, William. That's why parks were made.

Untold history

(By Ruth Jones)

If only the walls could talk at Montgomery Hall Park. If only the hills and trees could speak of times past. If only they would tell the story that barely a soul living knows. Even city documents don't convey the entire tale of Montgomery Hall Park.

Oh yes, the history is written down — the history of one of the city's most prominent, wealthy men, John Howe Peyton, building a mansion on 450 acres of land with more than fifty servants, naming it after his wife, Ann Lewis Montgomery.

The white history of the estate-turned-park is well documented but when it became the black park, the only written record you'll find is in a tattered burgundy and black hardback book, falling apart at the seams with no lettering, no labels.

Peyton was host to some of the biggest bashes in the area. When he threw a party, you knew it, and so did some of the country's famous faces. U.S. Sen. Henry Clay was a frequent guest. Peyton came to Staunton as a notable lawyer, later becoming twice the mayor of Staunton, a congressman and an influential, high-ranking presence on local boards like Western State Hospital.

Little did Peyton know that exactly one hundred years after his death his extravagant estate would become a beacon for the black population all over Virginia when it became a park.

The good times didn't stop rolling. Montgomery Hall Park was one of just two black parks in Virginia. It drew people from thirty to one hundred miles away. As it was in Peyton's day, the estate was once again the place to fill your social desires. Dances, games, picnics, concerts, plays—you name it—it happened at Montgomery Hall Park.

It didn't come easy. Blacks were relegated to using the city's park at Gypsy Hill one day a year before Montgomery Hall came along.

Historians have pieced together a timeline, and city documents show the transaction—150 acres of Montgomery Hall bought for a “negro park” at the sum of \$42,500 in June of 1946 from owners A.C. Thomas and his wife. City Council minutes from January of 1946 show that C.J. Waller and members of “several colored organizations” began requesting the use of Gypsy Hill Park certain days each week. Council didn't approve, but chose to consider another option.

What the minutes don't show is how the community came together for this park. The black leaders stepped up, like the Rev. T.J. Jemison. The Mount Zion Baptist Church minister agrees he was responsible for giving his people a voice and approaching city council about having a park of their own. They couldn't tolerate their one option anymore—one day a year at Gypsy Hill Park. That one visit a year was a feat within itself. It was Allen Jackson and other leaders like him, who pushed, prodded and fought for that one day at Gypsy Hill. But enough was enough and they were ready to have something of their own.

These are gems you'll find in that old book—the details you won't



find in city council minutes or historians' notebooks. What you'll find here are all the memories of the park that much of the black community has passed down orally for sixty years. But someone had been taking notes since 1947.

In this book are the handwritten minutes from the park committee meetings after the city purchased the park. Its minutes reach up to the fall of 1969. As the secretaries change, so does the handwriting. They might not have realized it at the time, but each secretary, starting in 1947 with Kenneth Jones and ending in 1969 with Helen Becks, was writing a chunk of Staunton's black history—one that no one else was keeping track of during a time of segregation. After the committee disbanded in the late 1960s, the last secretary, Becks, kept the book, and it recently resurfaced as Larry Vickers put out a call for all items pertaining to the park to include in the sixtieth anniversary celebration.

For about fifty-seven of the sixty years the park committee existed, Helen Becks was the park committee's secretary. For years, this old book of minutes sat in her home until recently, when she decided to hand it over to City Councilwoman Rita Wilson for safekeeping.

"I realized that the information was too important to be kept in my private possession," Becks said. "That was history."

Park's legacy built on determination

Nine-year-old Anita Johnston couldn't believe her eyes.

She had just walked into a mansion with nearly thirty rooms. A tennis court, bowling alley, and dance hall were just a few of the amenities. She and her older sister, Catherine, and younger sister, Barbara Ann, were awestruck.

"We were overwhelmed," said Anita Johnston Appling. "We came from a farm."

"I loved it because it had so much room," Catherine Johnston Carter said. "To us, it was much more modern than what we had moved from."

The three girls and their parents, John and Aileen Johnston, had been living on Folly Mills farm in Augusta County. They were responsible for taking care of duties on the farm.

They lived simply and weren't well-off, Appling said.

So when they entered this mansion with its indoor bathrooms and radiator heat, the girls couldn't wait to explore.

The girls couldn't wait to explore. "We went to all of the rooms," Carter said. They were impressed with its regal qualities, like the giant staircase going up the center of a dance hall. "I couldn't believe it," Appling said. "The grounds were so big. I was infatuated with the bowling alley." Carter on the other hand lived for the dance hall.

The Johnston family lived in just a portion of the home as caretakers on a salary of eighty-five dollars a week. The rest of the house was for public use. Girl Scouts had their own space there, the park committee used a room to entertain guests, clubs met there, and a first aid room was set up for any emergency that should arise. Appling shared a large room with her sisters, and when her brother came along, he had a room of his own.

The family was there for a reason. The Staunton City Council-appointed park committee hired them to care for the property after the city purchased the park. The committee was led by the Johnstons' pastor, the Rev. T.J. Jemison of Mount Zion Baptist Church. Other members at that time included Kenneth L. Jones, George Taylor, John Miller, the Rev. J.S. Carroll, A.E. Harden, Gertrude Caul, Irene Givens, and Roy Kincaid.

"(Jemison) was the one that persuaded the city to purchase property for the park," Carter said. "That was one of the first big things he did." As president of the committee, Jemison started pretty much from scratch. The committee had little help with city funds. The city contributed to electric and fuel bills to heat the building occasionally, and helped with chairs for the mansion. However, the committee had to foot the bill for most expenses, even taking out a loan from Planters Bank for \$1,118.55 to furnish the structure. The committee worked hard for money for a grand opening date of July 4, 1947, noted in *The Evening Leader*, gathering donations like a piano, curtain material and dishes; setting up electrical connections; and collecting records for dances, chairs, and more to make the park an enjoyable place to be.

Many businesses made the opening a success, too. Finkle's Furniture provided most of the furnishings, including a gift of four smoking stands. Staunton Paint and Wallpaper donated paint

and wallpaper, the manager of the Checkerboard Store gave the group a wall picture and residents even pulled ten dollars here and a dollar there out of their pockets to help.

Park minutes state that “Irene has some promises from friends later on.”

The giving didn’t stop.

While a host of people were abuzz with opening day looming, the Johnston girls were excited about their new digs.

A bowling alley, tennis court, baseball field, game room, activity rooms, and an emergency bedroom, among other spaces on the property, were all at their disposal.

While it was a far cry from the farm, Appling said agriculture wasn’t forgotten. They managed to raise some baby chicks at the park, too.

“Part of the farm coming in,” Appling explained.

The experience also was overwhelming for the girls because they weren’t even used to going to a park. Before Montgomery Hall Park, they kept themselves entertained on the farm. Blacks were allowed at Gypsy Hill Park just one day a year. Carter said her family didn’t even go on the one day a year that they were allowed. It just didn’t feel right.

James Becks of Staunton remembers how it was on that one day.

“They would let us go in the swimming pool and as soon as we got out, they let the water out,” Becks said.

The Johnston family wasn’t the only one that didn’t go to the park. Many felt like the allowance to go one day was an insult.

To have a place to call their own was the best the girls, and any black resident at that time, could hope for.

On the farm, the Johnston girls created their own fun. There was no swimming pool, swings, or merry-go-rounds. Carter would wait on the mailman to arrive because he brought chewing gum. Jump rope, hide and seek, and croquet were some other popular games.

“In different communities, we had what you call lawn parties,” Carter said.

When the park came, the lawn parties moved there, well-stocked with edibles like watermelon, potato salad, and chicken.

“Of course we were eating all of the things we wanted,” Carter said.

The children always managed to have a blast on bare, open land.

“All the kids were chasing lighting bugs,” she said. “Many times we played church. Somebody would preach and we would sing ... you sort of made your own fun.”

Park Life

Moonyene Jackson knows how her father, Allen Jackson, fought for a place for the black community to go. He pushed hard, helping earn the black community one day at Gypsy Hill Park.

“Daddy was really responsible for even that little bit of a breakthrough,” Jackson said. “After much lobbying, we were permitted to use that park once a year.”

A principal at Augusta County Training School, a teacher for many years, an active member of Mount Zion Baptist Church, and an aide for early voter registration, Jackson was a leader in the black community. He was also known for his athletic interests, in football and especially as a catcher with the Brown Bombers.

As a constant vocal presence, Moonyene Jackson said her father’s agenda reached further than just a day at Gypsy Hill.





Community leader Kenneth Jones talks to the crowd.

“He wasn’t trying to get one day,” she said. “He was concerned that there was a park available, and we weren’t able to use it.”

When Montgomery Hall Park opened, it changed everything. Allen Jackson was an instrumental part of its start as a committee member and lifeguard.

It became the social mecca for the black community. The site of family reunions, weddings, plays, church picnics, club meetings, Sunday vespers and Easter sunrise services. As time wore on, the committee continually approached council about hiring additional recreational staff for the park, such as an athletic director and recreation supervisor. Mae Tate Davis was appointed as the first recreation supervisor in July of 1947 on a salary of fifteen dollars per week. It was her responsibility to oversee the happenings in the park.

The committee was involved in every aspect and ran a tight ship, with expressive codes of conduct and appropriate avenues for organizations to book events. Groups like the Daughters of Ethiopia, the Matron’s Progressive Club, and Sunshine Circle often contacted the committee to conduct their meetings in one of the mansion’s many rooms.

Picnics happened nearly every day during the summer, and food spread down the long wooden tables that still sit in the park near the

house today. Jackson's mother, Mabel Jackson, ran the concession stand at the park, where she sold goodies like hot dogs, burgers, ice cream, and sodas. People coming from near and far found Mabel Jackson to be a trusting, giving person.

"(They) found credit easy to get from Mama when they had overspent and wanted that one more hot dog or burger," Jackson said. "What was so interesting to me, even then, was the fact that the next time that person came back, they always paid the bill. It was sometimes two weeks or a month later."

Barbara Ann Webb, Appling's sister, said as a child living in the park was the ultimate experience. They had access to everything every day all day. "We never longed for playmates," Webb said. "There was always someone with whom to interact."

Since it was the only recreational facility where blacks could interact in the city, anyone who frequented the park during that time can't forget the people it would draw.

It didn't have to be the weekend for a picnic. Nearly every day of the week, busloads of people from places like Clifton Forge, Richmond, Covington, Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Waynesboro and Lexington came to Montgomery Hall Park. Sometimes, forty busloads would easily roll in the entrance.

"It was a great time for socialization, for interacting with all kinds of people. Some people would return year after year," Webb said. They forged connections all over the state and while many have gone their separate ways, Webb and Jackson said they still think back on those days and those people.

"People used to come to the park to wash their cars," said Larry Vickers, who was an avid parkgoer. There was even a pageant for Miss Montgomery Hall, which became a popular social event. It's where the fondest memories lay for many. The excitement of meeting new people made coming to the park each day something to look forward to.

"I recall a time when the kids would call to see what bus would be in," said Bertie Pannell, also known as Tish. "The girls were always looking forward to buying a new outfit for that day."

And when they got there, they played the day away with friends both local and from afar. Tennis tournaments, badminton, horseshoes, volleyball, croquet, ping-pong matches, bowling, swimming, and a fierce game of bid whist or gin rummy awaited them. Lights on the porch

and baseball field kept people around after dark, however, most events shut down after a certain time unless there was a private party.

"I think the most spectacular gift to the park was the gift of the swimming pool," Vickers said.

The committee thought they would have to take out a ten or twelve year loan on a pool, but in 1952, it was built without strings attached thanks to Elizabeth Catlett, who was white. Her will states that she wanted to leave \$10,000 for the "benefit of the colored people of Staunton." Her sister Amy Catlett was left responsible for deciding where the money went, and chose the pool.

Helen Becks, a secretary on the park committee, remembers when the pool came. The Catletts were a prominent, wealthy family in the community and the community was appreciative of the gift.

Pannell remembers being a pool cashier her last two years of high school, collecting twenty-five cents. At the time, it was a lot of money, but everyone wanted to take a dip in the cool water.

The swimmers would run up to the building where the Thomas Fields VFW Post 7814 stood with a bowling alley beneath and change clothes.

"You got your feet dirty before you even got to the pool," Pannell said, chuckling at the memory.

But the most anticipated event was always dancing in the mansion. "The dance hall was the most popular activity," Pannell said. "That's where everybody used to hang."

Bands came from all over to play, and the committee made sure they were paid to come. Bands like the Harlem Play Boys. They came to perform at the park for twenty-five dollars..

Charging for most events was how they committee kept the lights on at the park. Ten dollars for events with city residents, twenty dollars for county residents. Weddings, plays, and dances had a fee, too.

Becks, who was the only hired person on the committee at ten to fifteen dollars per month, said after the city bought the park, it basically took a hands-off approach. "The city just said here's the park, you run it," she said. But paying wasn't the issue. That social time meant more than money.

It was the only place in this part of Virginia that blacks could call their own in the region and interact freely. Becks said the only other place blacks would go was Green Pastures in Clifton Forge.



Nearly everyone who remembers gets a twinkle in their eyes and a smile tugs the corner of their mouths as they talk about those times, especially the dance hall. The massive house made the dances all the more glamorous and glittery. New dresses, gowns, and suits came out for these occasions. The house, which at the time had a wrap-around porch, was the spot for romancing, too. "That's where all the romance took place," Mooneyne Jackson said. The memories draw deep belly laughs from her. "Holding hands, walking around that porch, grinning from ear to ear," she said. "And for us, holding hands was a big deal." The wide porch had enough room for people to pass each other, Jackson said. It ranks up there with the ping-pong games and merry-go-round rides as one of the memorable moments for her and her friend Smoogie Bell, who lived in the mansion for a while as well.

While romance might have happened outside, inside, Irene Givens was watching the youngsters closely. She and Earl Henry worked at the park, and Givens, better known as "Mom" Givens, was always monitoring behavior. She always made sure the girls and the boys weren't dancing too close. "That was so funny," said Williner Crawford. "She'd come right up to you and put her hand right between you." Mention "Mom" Givens to anyone who remembers her, and you'll hear her famous quote: "Let me see some light."

"She didn't like your bodies too close," Williner Crawford said.

"Everyone listened to them and parted ... until they left of course," Jackson said.

"She always had a word of wisdom (for) everybody," Williner Crawford said. "She was a lot of fun. If anything was inappropriate, you can be sure your parents were gonna hear about it. You look back and appreciate that."

Crawford said it was all about "Mom" Givens making you look good, having standards and feeling good about yourself and your actions. "It's just like one big happy family." Everything wonderful about the park is just memories for Appling now. When she visits, she sees a shadow of what used to be. The house still holds so much history with her family.

She'll never forget the birth of her brother, Jack Johnston, who was delivered by her aunt in that house in 1950. "It was just incredible," Appling said. At the time, she was twelve. "He was delivered

there because my mom didn't want to go to the hospital," she added. She heard her mother as she struggled to deliver a new sibling that evening. She waited and listened in her room, not knowing whether it was a new brother or sister for her. "It frightened me, of course," she said. "Dad came into our big bedroom. I distinctly remember him saying, 'You have a brother.'" It was pure elation for Appling. "For me, I couldn't keep my feet on the ground. It was a momentous occasion." She marched up the street the next day on her way to school at Booker T. Washington telling everyone she saw, "I have a brother! I was just a total fool," Appling said as she chuckled at the memory.



The momentous occasions, the togetherness, the constant activity have dwindled. In the late 1950s, park committee minutes begin to give a hint of uneasiness as members tried to figure out how to pay the electric, fuel and phone bills. They weren't sure if council would handle everything. Upkeep was getting expensive, and the old mansion and bowling alley needed constant repair.

As time went on and integration phased in, the park became less busy. In 1969, the park committee disbanded. There was no set time when the park fell out of the committee's hands. "I think that was a transition period when the city began to gradually take it out of the hands of the park committee," Becks said. "It was almost non-operating."

She believes the city finally decided the park was its responsibility. The committee needed more than what they were being given to work with to make the park run.

In Becks' opinion, it was time for the city to take responsibility. "I feel that the city has never given the attention to Montgomery Hall Park as Gypsy Hill Park," she said. "Consequently, it began to go down."

Jackson, who graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1965, remembers the activity starting to dwindle around 1969. She'd often come home from college and see the changes. "I noticed when we could come home, it was busy but it was a little less busy," she said. It followed the peak of the Civil Rights movement, when integration was in full force. That's also when Jackson remembers seeing whites in the park for the first time. "There weren't many. Maybe two or three," Jackson said. It was enough to get people talking because everyone was so used to being separate. "Two or three out there was a news item," she said.

Becks said it was a slow change. "As we began using Gypsy Hill Park more, we stopped using Montgomery Hall Park," Becks said. "It was more or less a gradual thing."

Today, picnic tables sprinkle the property. You might find one grill. The mansion has changed drastically. The wraparound porch is gone and mansion is converted to office space for Staunton Parks and Recreation. While it's full of athletic activities and scenery, in the eyes of those who remember its past, the park is not a fraction of what it once was. "It's disappointing not to see it being used to the max," Applling said. "I remember it as full of activity, full of people all the time."

After she'd been away from Staunton in the Midwest for a while,



Appling was stunned upon her return. The park still held nature's beauty, but lacked the luster she once loved. "I was just flabbergasted when I went into the house and saw that they had torn down the beautiful staircase," Appling said.

During the time Appling was gone, the park began to deteriorate. Vagrants frequented the park and there was vandalism. Appling's sister, who now lives in California, hasn't explored the park in a few years, but she's heard about it. "I can imagine it would

probably bring tears to my eyes to see what it has become now,” Webb said. “It was a grand old lady.”

In 1974, the Booker T. Washington Alumni Committee and the city collaborated to work on a plan to improve the park. Williner Crawford was one of those who joined the activity committee to try to revive the life there. “We used to hold discos in the park on Saturday,” she said. They sold hot dogs, chips, and sodas. “That was for the young people so they could have somewhere to go to dance,” Williner Crawford said.

But it didn’t last long. Just a few years, she said. Times had changed. People had changed. Melvin Fitchlee Crawford believes it was integration that changed the face of Montgomery Hall Park. “Integration really changed things,” he said. “It deprived the black race of being together as a family.”

Williner Crawford said people need to start coming again, and the city needs to bring things to the park to make people want to come. And parents need to remember what rich history is there.

“The parents stopped taking their kids out to Montgomery Hall Park,” Melvin Crawford said. “A lot of churches should get together and have their picnics out there, talent shows. Have their swimming out there.”

Despite the park’s many changes, Becks said it’s a part of history she’ll never forget.

“I feel proud to have been a part of it,” she said.

And while the days of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s aren’t coming back, those who remember believe Montgomery Hall Park can shine once again and be a place of socialization and activity as it once was. Just unite and work hard, they said, and you’ll see.

Through their eyes: Memories bring park’s history to life *(Ruth Jones)*

Melvin Fitchlee Crawford

If there’s one thing Melvin Fitchlee Crawford will never forget, it’s running to Montgomery Hall Park as a young man, scaling the fence around the pool and skinny-dipping with his friends late at night. Whenever he talks about it, he laughs. Of course it wasn’t all funny at the time when the police came to run them off, but it’s just another nostalgic moment of the good ole days at the park.

Near the water was where Crawford often found himself during the day, too, sitting under an umbrella on a wooden chair, watching people play in the water. He was a lifeguard and swim instructor at Montgomery Hall Park. He had taken courses through the American Red Cross to become an instructor. It was a gathering place for the youth.

Each day brought something new and sometimes, exciting. Crawford remembers saving many a life there, too. One day, he found himself pulling out someone much larger than he. "He was about 250 pounds," Crawford said. "He was drowning in the pool. He went to the deep side of the swimming pool and I dived in and pulled him out."

Sports were a big part of his life at the park as well. He was never far away from the tennis courts. Crawford will never forget the tennis tournaments, especially the day tennis legend Arthur Ashe dropped in on their games.

"I played tennis against him," Crawford said.

Did he come out on the winning side?

"Oh, no!" Crawford said.

Williner Crawford

When Williner Crawford finished her daily chores during the summer, there was only one place she wanted to go — the park. She would do almost anything to get there. Crawford, along with several other children, walked all the way from Middlebrook and over a field behind the park to get there. There was a little peril involved, too. She had to look out for the field's property owner, who had a habit of carrying a gun and chasing children off the land.

"He intimidated us enough to be scared of him," she said. "We knew what time he would be making his rounds and we would hide down behind the bushes and wait, watching him making his rounds."

One Fourth of July, she narrowly escaped getting caught, as the boys in the group pushed her over the fence just in time. She came out with a cut thumb and a ripped backseat.

But the trip was worth it for Crawford. The dancing, food and social life the park gave her was magnetic. It's something we had to look forward to, especially when the churches came from all over," she said. "Oh, my goodness. What a time, what a time!"

James Becks

It was all about the ball games for James Becks. He used to coach a Little League baseball team at Montgomery Hall Park. "They didn't

do too bad,” Becks said. “We played different teams. We were just having a good time.”

Good times also included all the activities at the park. “I enjoyed the kids,” he said. “The picnics and things we used to have (and) of course, the social hall ... that really sticks with me a lot.”

Becks spent a lot of time outdoors, from the baseball field to the tennis court.

He played in tennis tournaments at the park. “You only had one tennis court and you had to wait to get on it,” Becks said.

As a Scout master, Becks was always at the park with his Boy Scout Troop No. 156 from Mount Zion Baptist Church.

“We used to get out there and camp a lot,” he said. “We used to hike around the park ... show them how to cook hamburgers and things.”

Becks was also a member of the park committee. He and his wife, Helen Becks, are the last surviving members.

EmiJean and Oliver Tate

When Oliver Tate returned from World War II, there weren’t many places for him to turn to as a black soldier. “The African-American soldiers could not join the white post, 2216 in Staunton,” he said. “So on July 11, 1946, a meeting was held at Mr. Charles Johnson’s house on East Frederick Street with forty-two members.”

Soon, they became an official post, naming it after Thomas and Fields, two soldiers killed in the war. The post stayed on the upper floor of a building at Montgomery Hall Park, which used to be located in what is now a parking lot behind the house.

He and his wife of fifty-seven years, EmiJean Tate, were always there, staying busy and hosting many an event, from dances to dinners. While the park holds so many memories, EmiJean Tate said the most memorable for her is working with her husband at that post. They’ve been together almost all of the sixty years the post has been in existence. They have no intention on giving it up either. At eighty-four, Oliver Tate is the oldest chartered member of the post.

“I’ve been coming for years and nobody wants it so I guess I’ll keep it,” Oliver Tate said with a smile.

Alphonso Hamilton

When Alphonso Hamilton came to Staunton in 1955 to teach, he took a summer job at Montgomery Hall Park. “I was more or less an assistant to the supervisor, who was Irene Givens,” Hamilton said.

At the time, he was in his twenties. His main responsibility? “Supervise the young folks while they were out there and not let them play recklessly on the equipment out there,” he said. Children would try to come down the sliding board head first, among other things of that nature. Hamilton’s job was to stop them.

“Mrs. Givens and I worked together very well. She got along with just about everybody, that’s why we called her ‘Mom.’” It wasn’t all work and no play for Hamilton. He enjoyed a good game of ping-pong, horseshoes and tennis. “I played in my first tennis tournament,” he said. It was a mixed doubles match that he and his partner won.

“I still have that little trophy here,” he said. “I did better than I thought I was going to do.”

Hamilton just got rid of the racket a few years ago. He and his wife, Catherine Hamilton, enjoyed many moments at the park, especially the social activities, Catherine said. And she’ll never forget Irene Givens, whom she calls “Mom.”

The swimming pool was a place Alphonso Hamilton wasn’t far from either that summer. In the mornings, he helped teach swimming classes. His sons loved to take dip in the pool, too.

He remembers a scary moment at that time. Now he chuckles over it. One of his sons, Maurice Hamilton, was about five years old with no fear of water. Since he didn’t know how to swim, Maurice stayed at the shallow end of the pool, but on this particular day, he became adventurous. At this time, he didn’t know how to swim. “I looked and he had disappeared,” his father said. “I got a little bit panicky. In a few minutes, he came up. He had walked the ladder all the way down to the bottom of the pool and came up the same way. I was relieved to see him ... then I gave him a little speech.”

Montgomery Hall Park History

— John Howe Peyton, a young lawyer and graduate of Princeton University, moved to Staunton in 1808 to establish his legal practice. Originally from Stafford County, he built a mansion in the 1820s on several hundred acres of land southwest of Staunton, naming it for his second wife, Ann Lewis Montgomery. She was also the great-granddaughter of the co-founder of Staunton, John Lewis. The couple had ten children, one of whom who married George M. Cochran, Sr. of Staunton, whose descendants still reside in the area today.

— The then-Augusta County property consisted of 412 acres and an orchard with 4,000 apple trees. Also on site was a bowling alley and gymnasium, which contained separate guest rooms. This private sporting facility was one of few left in Virginia and was later demolished in 1973. The mansion itself included a reception hall, tea room, dining room, and conservatory. On the second floor were ten bedrooms and four baths.

— Another account indicates that the house caught fire in 1910 and had to be restored. John Wayland, wrote in his book, *Historical Homes of Northern Virginia*, that the house showed signs of alterations from its classic Revival form to a more Victorian style.

— Peyton was a busy and notable man in the area, known as the most famous criminal lawyer in Virginia. He was Commonwealth's Attorney for Augusta County for thirty-two years and held several other positions, including: twice the mayor of Staunton, a member of the House of Delegates, state senator, a congressman, a major in the army and chief of staff to Gen. Robert Porterfield during the War of 1812, and on many governing boards. He was the president of the Western Lunatic Asylum, now Western State Hospital, and served on educational boards such as the Virginia Female Institute, now Stuart Hall, Washington College, now Washington and Lee and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. As state senator, he played a key role in the founding of the Virginia Military Institute.

— Peyton died in 1847 and his property was passed from his heirs and changed hands many times afterward. Other owners included H.D. Peck of New York, the Walter family of Staunton, and John A. Kennedy.

— The city then purchased 150 acres of the property from Alexander Thomas, a private owner in 1946 for \$42,500, making it into a city park. Thomas and his family could no longer afford the upkeep of the property, where he also had a dairy farm. The creation of the park was intended for the black community to have recreational facilities. Several black leaders came together, creating a committee to maintain the park.

— For nearly twenty years, the park was kept up by the committee. Caretakers and their families lived in the mansion and worked with recreational staff to keep the park going. Over time, the park began to deteriorate and in 1974, the Booker T. Washington High School Alumni Committee along with the city developed a plan to restore the park. The city stepped up, applying for federal grants and pro-

viding \$25,000 out of the budget for its restoration. They determined it would cost nearly \$750,000 to restore the park fully and since the city could only provide \$25,000, plans came to a halt, but a year later, \$400,000 came through from a federal grant.

— Changes to the property included work on the mansion, which was eventually adapted to become the office facility for the Staunton Parks and Recreation Department.

(Sources: Historic Staunton Foundation, Historian Rick Chittum, Staunton Parks and Recreation, and Alexander Kirtley, grandson of Alexander Thomas)

Where do we go from here?: Officials say Montgomery Hall Park has plenty of life left

Despite all the changes of yesteryear, Montgomery Hall Park is still a hub for many athletic activities. It's what keeps the park alive, said Staunton Recreation Superintendent, Jennifer Jones. Hearing people say there's nothing to do in Montgomery Hall Park leaves her taken aback.

"There is more in this park, and it's more developed than it's ever been," she said. The park has the city's only lighted soccer complex, shelters and a new eighteen-hole disc-golf course, which is a "huge draw for eighteen to thirty-year-olds," Jones said.

Athletic activities of the past still remain, like tennis, baseball and the swimming pool. Weekends are packed with softball tournaments. Robert E. Lee High School uses the park field and trails, too. Hiking trails wind through the dense trees and hills. "Part of the beauty of Montgomery Hall is the natural setting," Jones said.

While it's busy in the way of athletics, Jones said she can see how people want other things to do there. While Gypsy Hill has many music series, festivals and events, Montgomery Hall doesn't. It's an idea Assistant City Manager Jim Halasz isn't opposed to. But he said it's up to organizations and groups to take an interest in using Montgomery Hall for their events.

"I think what we'll see is that the community will continue to demand more recreation and the use of all our parks will increase," Halasz said. "I think Montgomery Hall will have more opportunities for new types of recreation than Gypsy Hill because Gypsy Hill is pretty full. If there are suggestions for new recreational opportunities, that's one of the first places we'll look."

In the meantime, it's up to the recreation department to foster new

development. “We’ve had events up here that have gone really well,” Jones said, but the sixtieth celebration of the park will be the biggest since she can remember. Today, they’ll throw a lawn party reminiscent of the past with musical guests, a vesper service, food and games. “If it works, we’ll look to have that as an annual event,” she said. [This appeared in the newspaper on the day of the anniversary celebration.]

A recent study reflects that the two-thirds of the city’s residents have never been to Montgomery Hall Park. She’s hoping this celebration is a kick off to many more.

“I think this is a really good start,” Jones said. “We’re excited about it. It’s hard to not get excited when you listen to so many people’s stories and how deep the heritage goes here. It was eye-opening.”

And improvements are on the way. Right now, Jones said they’re setting up the building to have permanent power outlets for bands and soon, they’ll install a new playground.

A place to call home

(By Cindy Corell)

Until the mid-1940s, black families depended on church events, lawn parties, and home-grown fun for family get-togethers. They were welcome at Gypsy Hill Park only one day a year. In 1946, at the urging of black leaders and members of Trinity Episcopal Church, the city purchased 150 acres of land just west of Staunton for use as a park. It was called Montgomery Hall Park, named for the estate’s mansion built by a wealthy lawyer in 1820.

By all accounts the 1950s were the glory years at Montgomery Hall Park. Families from the Central Shenandoah Valley poured into the park for lawn parties, picnics, church socials, family reunions, swimming pool parties and dances—lots of dances.

Bus loads of folks from around Virginia came in—the local youngsters would call ahead to see where the buses were from so they could come in to see new friends. With integration came the blending of blacks and whites at public schools and public parks, and over the years “the black park,” as it was known, was less crowded.

Today Montgomery Hall Park is home to the Staunton Parks and Recreation Department. Lighted athletic fields draw schools and groups for tournaments and casual play. A disc-golf course is the latest attraction at the park.

Today Montgomery Hall Park will once again fill with families seeking fun in the sun. And many of them will trip over a memory or two. In this special section, you'll learn the history of the park through firsthand experiences and photographs, and find out what the future has in store for this fixture of Staunton history.

Faith in park's future: Vespers celebrate Montgomery Hall Park

(By Joel Banner Baird)

The shade and the breeze were a blessing at Sunday evening's vesper service at Montgomery Hall Park. So was the music, led by Staunton's own Women of Faith. "Can't turn around; we've come this far by faith," they sang.

The vespers marked the end of a weekend-long celebration of the park's sixtieth year. It honored a tradition that helped the region's



black community maintain its strength through decades of second-class citizenship. Those memories, said the Rev. John R. Fisher in his message, can now help heal and unite neighborhoods.

Fisher's stirring sermon invoked Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan. "This nation is traveling its own Jericho road," he said. "We have people whose practice of their religious beliefs is limited to their kinds of people. But our neighbor is not only those we know; it's every person who crosses our path. We are sending a message today that we love Staunton, Va., and that we love what this community stands for."

For a long time Montgomery Hall Park was one of only two public parks in Virginia that allowed unrestricted access to blacks. It still remains at the fringes of the city's awareness, said Staunton Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jennifer Jones.

"We recently did a survey of walkers in Gypsy Hill Park," she said. "Two-thirds of them had never been over here. From our standpoint, we really wanted to introduce this park to the public, we wanted to celebrate its unique history and we wanted to have a birthday party."

An ice cream social followed the singing and the prayers. Larry Vickers, who worked with Parks and Rec to organize the weekend's fete, handed out napkins under the ice cream tent. "We used to have vespers every Sunday here," Vickers said. "We had something going on here every day of the week. All these stories shouldn't get lost in the shuffle."

"This is a historical landmark," he continued. "This is where you were safe. You could go to school, you could go to church, or you could come here."

Elliott Knob Firetower

by Nancy Sorrells

In Virginia, sites being considered for cell towers must undergo a cultural resources evaluation. When the historical society received an inquiry in regard to a site atop Elliott Knob, Nancy Sorrells undertook the task of pulling together information about Elliott Knob.

Elliott Knob, the third highest peak in Virginia (4,463 feet), has a long history of human activity at the summit. During the Civil War, the peak was used as a Confederate signal station, while the USGS has used the summit for survey purposes and has a permanent survey marker near the present fire tower. The site has also been used for experimental forestry practices and the spruce grove near the top, which is visible from miles away, was planted by the forest service in the 1920s. Civilian Conservation Corps and Forest Service activity has included the construction of a stone springhouse, stone walls, and a small pond. Since the 1970s there has been a communications area set aside for antennas. The historic and natural resources of Elliott Knob often overlap. Several hiking trails lead to the top and interconnect with a longer trail across the Great North Mountain ridgeline of the Allegheny front. The top has also served as a peregrine hawk station to fledge young birds.

The most succinct summary of the natural resources at the summit is found in the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries *Birding & Wildlife Guide*:

The area can be productive for finding unique neotropical breeding songbirds. Mostly comprised of mature old-growth hardwood forests, with large oaks, maples, beech, and scattered pines, Elliott Knob is the nesting ground for scarlet tanager, black-throated blue warbler, and yellow-billed cuckoo. Spring and fall migration can bring a larger diversity of songbirds. Extensive and lengthy trails lead to high elevation points, offering open vistas from which broad-winged hawks might be seen during fall migration. Kettles of turkey vultures are almost directly at eye level. Snakes, such as northern copperhead, lurk in the leaf litter of the woodlands. Northern fence

lizard and five-lined skink scatter along the forest floor as well. Though rarely seen, keep an eye out for mammals such as black bear and red fox.

The current firetower, built in 1948 to replace one built in the 1920s, has been an integral part of the George Washington National Forest's mission of forestry management. The United States Forest Service was founded in 1905 as an agency to manage public lands through the promotion of quality water and timber management. Fire suppression, particularly in the east where there was a long history of arson and fire culture, was key to proper timber management in the minds of early forestry officials. The early policy was zero tol-



Firetower at Elliott Knob, 2006



erance for wildfires. To carry out this plan, lookout towers were constructed at high points within the forests and manned with fire spotters who could telephone or radio for help at the first sign of fire.

The history of the forest service's national fire suppression policy is a fascinating one and lookout towers such as the one at Elliott Knob were integral parts of the action plan devised by the service. The program really got underway in 1911 when Congress passed the Weeks Act

that provided financial aid for state forestry organizations that participated in cooperative fire protection work with the federal government. In 1935, Ferdinand Silcox, the Forest Service Chief, introduced the "10AM Policy," which became a new universal U.S. Forest Service goal to control a fire by 10 a.m. the morning following its spotting. While the number of forest fires decreased slightly from the 1920s through 1960s, fires continued to burn and could not be stopped completely.

The desire for good timber management was heightened at the end of World War II with the return of soldiers and the subsequent baby boom that created a need for lumber for the expanding housing market. Fire was considered destructive and counterproductive to that timber need and so the forest service developed an ingenious and remarkably educational campaign. Any American will recognize the main icon of that public service message – Smokey Bear – and his slogan "Only you can prevent forest fires." The campaign was a huge success in promoting environmental stewardship and patriotism and strengthened the fire suppression policy of the forest service.

The forest service presence in Augusta County arrived in the village of Deerfield, below Elliott Knob, in 1921 or 1922 when a ranger station was established. From there, crews fanned out to construct firetowers at Elliott Knob, Mill Mountain, and Wallace Peak – all to be used as lookout stations during the fire season in the spring and fall when timber was dry and the wind was brisk as well as at other times during drought conditions. The forest service ran telephone lines from the lookout stations to the village depot.

The life of a firetower lookout man was awful tedium, mixed with a few moments of excitement, and occasionally some danger. Oral histories from Ernest N. Kelley who manned the Elliott Knob tower for thirty-seven years starting in 1928 and Melvin A. Wheeler, who worked the Mill Mountain Firetower in the 1940s, provide a good glimpse into their routine. The men would each hike up to their assigned tower with enough supplies for about two weeks. They were up by 5 a.m. scanning the horizons with binoculars for signs of smoke up to one hundred miles away. If something were spotted they would use their azimuth to pinpoint the fire on the map. Then they radioed the other towers to verify their map readings and report an exact location. At times there were as many as thirteen fires underway simultaneously in the George Washington.

The man associated with both the current tower at Elliott Knob and the one that it replaced was Deerfield native Kelley who worked for the forest service for forty-one years from 1928 until 1969. Until 1968 when aircraft were used to spot fires, Kelley manned the tower during fire season. He would hike in to the tower along the steep Cold Springs Trail while lugging his two weeks worth of supplies. He got his water from one of two springs just below the knob and he cut and hauled firewood up into the tower as well.

Life in the tower was enjoyable for Kelley although sometimes the weather could be harsh with intense cold and high winds. Two extant ledger books help understand the daily life of the Tower Spotter. One is the radio logbook kept by the Elliott Knob spotter. The other is a guest book signed by hikers who made it to the top and visited with Kelley. Stints in the tower were often longer than two weeks, in which case more supplies were packed in to the lookout. During one particularly dry spell, Kelley remained at the tower for forty-seven straight days.

In 1942 Kelley was sitting in a chair between the stove and telephone when lightening struck the telephone pole, ran through the line, melted the phone and blasted Kelley out of his chair. He was unconscious for several hours and hospitalized for a long while afterward, but the only permanent damage he suffered was that the blast loosened all the fillings in his teeth. In 1949 Kelley fell from the tower, breaking his heel and spending forty days in the hospital.

By 1947 it became obvious that Kelley was encountering more than the normal danger when manning the tower. The structure, built in the 1920s was unstable. During the spring 1947 fire season he noticed an increased vibration in the tower. A handwritten forest service memo from a ranger dated May 14, 1947 is pretty clear:

Inspected tower. Noted that window sills were badly rotten. Screw-driver could be pushed completely through holes into inner wall. Weather boarding is rotten outside. Corner posts, which are anchored by long bolts to tower steel structure, are probably rotten from all appearances. Main steel structure appears to be in fair shape. Bolts are tight and show no signs of wear in seat. Braces are thin and have considerable vibration. They are easily shaken by yr hand and are possibly worse in some points. A more thorough inspection should be made by a qualified engineer to determine if steelwork and tower cabin are of adequate strength to withstand the extreme conditions of wind, rain, and ice that exist here. Such an inspection should at least consist of removing a portion of the bolting from the framework and boards from the sides and main support studdings. Lookout Kelley states that he considers the tower to be unsafe in its present condition.

Further inspections and memos noted that the underlying problem was that the 1923 tower design lacked knee bracing and had flimsy diagonal bars. In fact the tower had been supported by guy wires almost from its erection. Further, the wind was getting in under the cabin shutters and actually lifting the entire tower. Winds atop Elliott Knob approach those on the Presidential Range in New Hampshire.

Forest Engineer John J. Laing noted on August 5, 1947:

From what I can gather, the condemnation of this structure has been pending for a number of years. Certainly its replacement should not be delayed any longer. With the exception of further investigation of footing conditions and the removal of the shutters, I would not recommend the expenditure of another cent on the present structure. It has reached a point where we will either have to abandon the present station or replace with a safe and adequate structure.

Alarmed, the regional forester responded the same day with the following: Not only was Elliott Knob a key lookout on the Deerfield District and necessary for any combination of ground-tower detection scheme but it is also valuable for lookouts on the Forest, this station is strategically located for any radio communication center which may be developed in the future.

Plans were well underway by the spring of 1948 for a new, safer tower. Kelley supervised the crew that replaced the dilapidated structure with the present thirty-foot steel tower with a fourteen-by-fourteen-foot cabin and a catwalk. All national forest towers were built according to plans developed by the U.S. National Forest Service. Deviation from the plan was only allowed under extenuating circumstances. From the construction notes located in the former Deerfield Ranger District office in Staunton, it does not appear that the crew atop Elliott Knob deviated much from the plan although some changes were made in the cabin and floor joists. The "Specifications for Primary Lookout House and Towers, Standard for District 5" noted that: These specifications are intended to embrace all material necessary in the erection and furnishing of the building in all its parts and to furnish such instructions as appear necessary to give the building a general idea of the plan. The plan is standardized and must be followed unless the District Forester's permission to deviate from it is secured.

The foundation was to be set in solid and level earth and the cabin on top was to be "set square with the cardinal directions, that is, squarely north and south and east and west." The building materials "should conform as closely as possible to the specifications given in the builder's list." The cabin atop the tower was glassed in on all sides. A circular map table was located inside. The table had sights that could be revolved until they lined with a smoke sighting so that exact fire locations could be pinpointed.

The forest service specifications included everything from the type of lumber to the type of caulk and everything in between. Directions were given for location, excavation, foundation and materials (sills, inside finish, flues, doors and windows, closets, platform and cupboards, floor joists, studding, bridging, roof, siding, painting, anchoring, towers, telephone wiring, and insulation against lightning). In April of 1948 the cost estimates for the Elliott Knob tower

were \$651 for the materials, \$1,670 for labor, \$875 for equipment use (hauling materials and crews from Sugar Grove, W.Va. to the site using a five-ton truck and tractor with trailer), and \$300 to dismantle the existing tower. The grand total was \$3,496; however this estimate was for a thirteen-by-thirteen-foot cabin atop a 30-foot tower. The final tower had a fourteen-by-fourteen-foot cabin.



Construction was slow because of delays in supplies and financing. In July the forest service was searching for just the right caulk for the tower roof and also trying to find a professional glazier for the glasswork. They were also waiting on fourteen pieces of locust lumber. All was apparently complete by the spring of 1949. In April of 1949 the Project Work Inventory described the grounds atop Elliott Knob as follows:

A-3 Fire Control-Improvements

Improvements Consist of:

30' steel tower with 14x14 metal cab

Transfer from Jefferson [National Forest]. Constructed 1948

Garbage Pit

An old pit privy

Spring with dry Rockwall

Tool and wood shed wooden structure 8' x 12'

Grounds about one acre including stone wall and spruce plantation.

Job consists of painting tower & house as needed.



Interior details of the tower were wrapped up in the spring of 1950. Those included finishing the sheet rock and putting a top on the wooden cupboards where the food and utensils were stored. Internal forest service memos in the 1950s and 1960s document various maintenance and improvement work done at the tower and surrounding site. Memos also document the communication improvements of telephone and radio that were continuously tweaked in order that the tower could best serve its purpose as a fire observation post.

Elliott Knob has not been manned on a regular basis since 1968. Two things led to that change. The first was a shift in policy toward fires and a change in national attitude (thanks to Smokey) about setting fires. No longer are all fires considered bad. In fact, cooler fires are considered necessary to clear out a build up of dead and downed material that could create a hotter, deadlier fire if allowed to accumulate. Today the forest service, at times, actually sets controlled fires. The second reason that the tower was no longer manned was a shift in technology. Aircraft and satellite images, for instance, meant that the use of manned firetowers to spot fires was no longer always needed.

For over sixty years, however, the firetower was the linchpin in managing America's treasure – its national forest. In 1952 there were 5,000 towers in thirty-six states. In the George Washington National Forest alone there were twenty-four towers. Today two, the steel tower at Elliott Knob and the stone tower at High Knob, are all that remain on

forest service land. Duncan Knob and Sugar Loaf were transferred first to the state and then to private ownership and are declining rapidly. The Elliott Knob Tower is one of only three in all of Virginia of its type, earning it a place on the National Historic Lookout Tower Register.* Today only a few towers such as the one at Elliott Knob remain to remind us of the history associated with the conservation of our national forest system, and of the people who worked hard to preserve such a powerful natural, cultural, and historic resource.

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*The National Historic Lookout Register (NHLR) is maintained by the American Resources Group® in Washington, D.C. This is the U.S. equivalent of the World Lookout Register. The registers are a cooperative effort of the Forest Fire Lookout Association, the National Forestry Association, the National Woodland Owners Association, the U.S. Forest Service, state foresters and Interior agencies.

Listing in the National Historic Lookout Register is often a first step toward eventual nomination to the National Register of Historic Sites maintained by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Sometimes necessary structural modifications preclude listing in the latter register, and the only appropriate recognition given to these historic lookout sites is that afforded by the NHLR.

NHLR Listing

Elevation: 4421' Coordinates: N38.166395 W79.313935

Administrative Unit: U.S. Forest Service

Cooperators: Deerfield Ranger District (now the North River Ranger District)

Elliott Knob Lookout is in the George Washington National Forest some 150 miles west of Washington D.C. It is a metal 14'x14' live-in cab with catwalk atop a 30 tower built in 1948 to replace an earlier tower built in the 1920s. Once one of many, it is now one of only three lookouts of its type remaining in Virginia and is unusual in that it is reached only by trail.

Native American Writers in Augusta County

by Susan Blair Green

In June 2006 the author joined a study group from Mary Baldwin College and spent a week at the Navajo Nation capital, Window Rock, Arizona. Later in the summer she researched a related paper on N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko and discovered that Momaday and a nineteenth century Native American writer, Alice Callahan, had both attended school in Augusta County. The attached paper is the result of some additional reading about Momaday and Callahan and their connections to Augusta.

Many readers in Augusta County know that political figures like Barry Goldwater Junior and Senior and John Dean attended Staunton Military Academy, but it is less well known that two important Native American writers were educated in Augusta County schools. In the nineteenth century S. Alice Callahan (Muscogee/Creek) attended the Wesleyan Female Institute during the 1887-1888 academic year, and in the 1950s N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa/Cherokee) spent his senior year of high school at the Augusta Military Academy, graduating in 1952.

In a recent (1997) republication of Callahan's novel *Wynema, A Child of the Forest*, the editor, A. Ruoff, notes that Callahan's work is "probably the first novel written by a woman of American Indian descent."¹ Ruoff also provides a brief biography of Callahan (1868 – 1894). She was the daughter of a white mother and a father, Samuel Benton Callahan, who was one-eighth Muscogee. While Samuel Callahan's family originally migrated from Alabama to Texas, he moved to Indian Territory in eastern Oklahoma in 1859 and started cattle ranching operations that eventually made him a rich man. An ardent supporter of states' rights, Callahan enlisted in 1861 in the First Creek Mounted Volunteers for the Confederacy, and in 1862 and 1864, Callahan was elected and served as a member of the Con-

federate Congress at Richmond. Following the war, Callahan was active in Muscogee tribal politics and served as superintendent of the Methodist-run Wealaka Boarding School for Muscogee children, located in an area southeast of present-day Tulsa.

Alice Callahan apparently shared her father's enthusiasm for Indian education, and by 1886 she was teaching in Okmulgee, Indian Territory. Because of her desire to further her own education and possibly because of her father's ties to the Methodist Church and his experience in Virginia during the Civil War, Ms. Callahan left Okmulgee to attend the Wesleyan Female Institute (WFI) in Staunton, Virginia. According to Martha Hamrick,² during the academic year 1887-1888 the WFI was still attracting a full complement of students under the leadership of Rev. William Harris, although the financial strains that finally closed the school in 1900 were already beginning to show. In its baccalaureate curriculum WFI required orthography, English grammar and composition, history of the U.S. and Europe, mathematics, philosophy, German, French, and Latin, as well as chemistry, music, drawing, and painting.³ Ruoff quotes the *Indian Journal* as announcing the return to Oklahoma of both Ms. Callahan and one other (possibly Muscogee) student, Lotti Edwards, both of whom had " 'won honors of rare merit in that institute [WFI] as a reward for persevering effort and close application'." ⁴ Based on this evidence, it appears that the Staunton WFI may have been a welcoming institution to Native American girls who had Methodist affiliation.

After her return to Oklahoma, Ms. Callahan taught for several years in Oklahoma schools for Indian children. In 1892 she edited a Methodist journal, *Our Brother in Red*, and in 1892-93 she taught at the Wealaka School. Her letters from this period suggest that she was reading Thackeray, Bulwer Lytton, and Dickens. She wanted badly to return to Staunton to finish her degree and anticipated studying "languages [especially French] & literature & Mathematics. . . . When I finish I am going to build up a school of my own."⁵ Unfortunately Ms. Callahan died in January 1894 of pleurisy before she was able to return to Staunton.

Before her death, however, Ms. Callahan wrote and published her novel, *Wynema* (1891). While not a well-known work, *Wynema* does provide glimpses of Muscogee tradition and of Ms. Callahan's time at WFI as well as giving voice to Ms. Callahan's concerns about



U.S. treatment of native peoples. The heroine of Ms. Callahan's story is Genevieve Weir, a young Methodist woman from Alabama who comes to Indian Territory to teach school for the Muscogee children, including the girl Wynema, who soon becomes her best pupil and friend. Genevieve aspires to teach these "savages," who as yet speak no English, "the ancient and modern languages and higher mathematics,"⁶ a curriculum probably inspired by that of the WFI in Staunton. The description of Keithly College, a neighboring Methodist school founded by the man whom Genevieve eventually marries, was based, Ruoff suggests, on the Wesleyan Female Institute.⁷ For example, just as the WFI had collected money in 1875 for the addition of two fountains to the school grounds,⁸ Keithly College also boasted a "beautiful fountain . . . formed of three ducks with their heads thrown upward, together making the spray."⁹

The plot of *Wynema* in many ways is typical of the sentimental domestic romances popular with nineteenth century women readers. In these novels the virtuous heroine succeeds in finding an appropriately sensitive and forward-thinking husband because of her pluck and energy and her great virtue. The proper modesty and honesty are characteristic, in *Wynema*, of both the white Genevieve and the Indian Wynema. As might be expected of good Methodist heroines, both Genevieve and Wynema decry the evils of male drunkenness, especially among the Indians, and admire the Women's Christian Temperance Union and its leader, Frances Willard. Indeed, once Genevieve and Wynema travel to Alabama to visit the Weir family, the plot becomes almost secondary to the issues that are topics of debate and discussion between the two young women and their would-be suitors. Wynema and Genevieve both make heated pleas



on behalf of women's suffrage, and characters debate at length the possible outcomes of enforced allotments of Muscogee lands, the default in per capita payments for Muscogee lands sold under false pretenses, and the pros and cons of women's suffrage. Genevieve finally breaks with her Alabama fiance because he wants only an agreeable "little wife" and cannot accept the view of "sensible men" that "the idea of a woman being unwomanly and immodest because she happens to be thoughtful and to have 'two ideas above an oyster' . . . is absurd and untrue."¹⁰

Throughout the novel the argument is also made, sometimes implicitly and, in later sections, explicitly, in favor of viewing Native Americans as rational human beings, capable of being educated in Western culture and deserving, as God's creatures, of moral respect and legal protection of their lands and rights. For slightly more than the final third of the novel, the focus shifts almost entirely to the murder of the Sioux leader Sitting Bull and the ensuing massacre of Sioux women and children, along with their husbands and fathers, at Wounded Knee. Though the narrative means of connecting the cozy, married, Methodist couples in Oklahoma with the fighting in the Dakotas is somewhat far-fetched, Ms. Callahan's passionate defense of the Sioux is absolutely convincing. Finally Ms. Callahan drops the pretense of speaking through her characters and addresses "my reader" directly: "It is not my province to show how brave it was for a great, strong nation to quell a riot caused by the dancing of a few 'bucks' – for *civilized* soldiers to slaughter indiscriminately, Indian women and children. . . . [but] what will the annals of history handed

down to future generations disclose to them? Will history term the treatment of the Indians by the United States Government, right and honorable?"¹¹

While admirable in its defense of the intellectual worthiness and human value of both women and Native Americans, *Wynema* was not a literary success. N. Scott Momaday (1934 -), on the other hand,



won a Pulitzer Prize for his first published novel, *House Made of Dawn* (1968), a novel describing the return of a World War II veteran to the Jemez Pueblo and his struggles to find his place in society through native ritual and ceremony. According to James Ruppert, *House Made of Dawn*, "is usually considered to mark the beginning of a steady rise in literary production by Native American writers often termed 'The Native American Renaissance'."¹² Momaday's father was Kiowa, his mother a mixture of white and Cherokee. As Momaday himself explains in *The Names: A Memoir* (1976), he spent several early years with his Kiowa family in Oklahoma but then lived with his parents on the Navajo reservation at Shiprock, New Mexico; Tuba City and Chinle, Arizona, and then in Anglo towns like Hobbs in southern New Mexico. Finally the family settled at the Jemez Pueblo west of Albuquerque and made a lasting home.

Like his mother, during his youth Momaday struggled to "imagine" himself as Indian, and *The Names* presents humorous interior monologues as Momaday tries to define what is "Indian" about himself: "Well I might go to West Point I told mom that I was probably going to West Point and she said well we'll see you can probably go to West Point if you really want to but maybe my eyes

aren't good enough . . . the Indians didn't wear glasses not the Kiowas how can you hunt buffalo with glasses on I broke my glasses where is West Point anyway They died with their boots on Custer was at West Point and he liked onions" ¹³

Attracted by the military tradition of the Kiowa but possibly hampered by his need for glasses, Momaday did not attend West Point. However, after Momaday attended high school for several years in Bernalillo and Albuquerque, New Mexico, Momaday's parents decided that they "wanted me to have the benefit of a sound preparation for college, and so we read through many high school catalogues. After long deliberation we decided that I should spend my last year of high school at a military academy in Virginia." ¹⁴ According to Momaday, this choice was "a romantic kind of thing," influenced by his mother's family's connections to Virginia and Momaday's own subsequent interest in the Old South. ¹⁵

And so Momaday came to Augusta Military Academy (AMA) in 1951 and graduated with the class of 1952. Visitors to the AMA museum in Fort Defiance will find Momaday represented by both *The Names* and *House Made of Dawn* in the case of printed works by AMA graduates. In Momaday's senior yearbook, the *Recall* for 1952, he is pictured as a young, uniformed cadet, a private in "A" Company, and he appears also as a member of the 1952 varsity fencing team. He was a member of the YMCA and the Augusta Sabre Team; he made the Honor Roll and served on both the *Recall* yearbook and the *Bayonet* newsletter for alumni. In the caption under his senior picture he is described as "academically the best — winner of the YMCA Amateur contest — Gentleman of the highest order — true son of Augusta — The more you know of the cadet, the more your admiration grows."

Unlike Ms. Callahan's time in Augusta County, Momaday's time was only the beginning of a long and illustrious career as a writer and an academic. Momaday completed his undergraduate work at the University of New Mexico and completed both a master's degree in creative writing and a Ph.D. in literature at Stanford University. ¹⁶ He has held professorships at several universities, including Stanford and the University of Arizona, and, as Momaday describes in his book of essays *The Man Made of Words* (1997), has traveled and taught in Europe and Russia. He

has written other fiction and poetry, including *The Way to Rainy Mountain* and *The Ancient Child*. In all of his works Momaday continues to define “what’s Indian” about himself and to investigate what it means to be a “hybrid” in American society, a person of mixed native blood and, like Callahan, a product of families with both white and Native American ancestors and loyalties.

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¹⁴*Ibid.*, 160.

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¹⁶Chadwick Allen, “N. Scott Momaday: becoming the bear,” *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature I*, eds. Joy Porter and Kenneth M. Roemer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 209.

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ACHS Family Heritage Program

The Augusta County Historical Society announces with pride the formation of a family heritage recognition program. Augusta Pioneers has been formed for those whose family roots extend to the early years of the county, and who wish to submit their line of descent to complement the growing archives of the society.

Three types of membership in Augusta Pioneers will be recognized. *First Families* of Augusta County **is the membership category for those whose ancestors settled in the county in the period from its founding in 1738 (or before) to the year 1800.** *Pioneer Families* of Augusta County **is for those whose forbears settled in Augusta County in the nineteenth century, that is between the years 1801 and 1900.** *Junior Pioneers* of Augusta County **recognizes young people from the cradle to age eighteen who are descendants of First Families or Pioneer Families.**

Jane Sherman, C.G.R.S. (Certified Genealogical Record Searcher), who suggested the society to the board, has graciously consented to serve as volunteer Registrar for Augusta Pioneers. Her valuable professional expertise in the records of Augusta County as well as her long service with the Daughters of the American Revolution and other distinguished patriotic and ancestral organizations make her uniquely qualified as registrar for the new society.

If you believe that you are qualified to be an Augusta Pioneer or if you would also like to enroll young family members—children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews—simply send in the form below to receive the application. Jane Sherman will check the completed applications and then certify to the society's board that you have been accepted for membership in either First Families of Augusta County, Pioneer Families of Augusta County, or Junior Pioneers of Augusta County. The application genealogy files will become a part of the archives of the Augusta County Historical Society and available to family researchers.

All members will receive a handsome matted certificate of membership, suitable for framing. Membership in Augusta Pioneers is a one-time recognition that lasts a lifetime. Once the initial application fee is paid, there are no annual dues assessed. The fee for membership in Augusta Pioneers is a flat \$40 for descent from one ancestor. Additional ancestors may be added for \$15 each. The junior member enrollment fee is \$15. Upon reaching the age of eighteen, junior members can elect to pay the additional \$25 to become full-fledged members.

____ Yes! I am interested in becoming an Augusta Pioneer. Please send the official application form and instructions for its completion to:

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____
Phone _____
e-mail _____

Please note that you may also print this same form from our website
www.augustacountyhs.org

***Mail the form to: Augusta County Historical Society, Attn.: Jane Sherman, P.O. Box 686, Staunton, VA 24402-0686

Books for sale by the historical society

Augusta County Atlas, by Joseph A. Waddell and Jed Hotchkiss (orig., 1885; 3rd reprinting, 1991). This work is the basic guide to 19th-century Augusta communities, roads, and geographic features. Illustrated with historic drawings of Augusta County farmsteads and sites from the late 19th century and based on the maps that Jed Hotchkiss, Stonewall Jackson's cartographer, drew. \$35 + \$1.75 tax

Augusta County History: 1865-1950, by Richard K. MacMaster. Carefully documented, well illustrated, annotated updating of Augusta County history by a skilled professional historian. \$30 + \$1.50 tax

Augusta Declaration (a poster). Historic statement of the grievances of Augusta County residents against the British. \$3 + \$.15 tax

Augusta Historical Bulletin, back issues to 2005. Prior to 2000, copies published semiannually and saddlestitched. From 2000 to present copies published annually, perfect bound, and indexed. \$15 + \$.75 tax

Calendar Drawings, by local artist Joe Nutt. Features historic homes, churches, and other landmarks drawn by local artist. Each calendar contains drawings of 13 different landmarks and written sketches. Available years: 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 (specify year when ordering) \$2 + \$.10 tax

Free Negroes in Augusta and Staunton compiled by Katharine G. Bushman. Thoroughly done collection of names from local records vital to understanding early African-American history. Done by an experienced genealogist and local historian. \$10 + \$.50 tax

Gibraltar of the Shenandoah—Civil War Sites and Stories of Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County, Virginia by Robert H. Moore II. Accurate and scholarly tour guide to Civil War sites in the Augusta County vicinity. Well illustrated with specific directions to locations. Maps, index, and appendices with names of persons who served. \$24.95 + \$2.48 tax

Great Valley Patriots by Howard M. Wilson. Inspiring account of patriot leaders of the Shenandoah Valley from the American Revolutionary era by a veteran historian of the Valley. Special emphasis on early Scotch-Irish settlers. \$15 + \$.75 tax

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Mills of Augusta County by Janet and Earl Downs. Comprehensive survey of Augusta County flour mills during the age of wheat agriculture in Augusta County. Well illustrated and indexed. Names of many Augusta County families in all parts of the county. \$40 + \$2 tax

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